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ABSTRACT

Minority group arts in Britain are discussed as a means to develop and enhance a multi-cultural society. The arts of the following ethnic groups are discussed: Bangladeshis, Chinese, Cypriots, East and Central Europeans, Indians, Pakistanis, West Indians, and Africans. Following a description of the cultural activities of each group, specific recommendations are made for various national and local government support measures. General recommendations are made for the continuation and development of ethnic minority arts, and the testimony of several professional organizations with an interest in arts and entertainment is included. (WP)

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THE ARTS BRITAIN IGNORES

The Arts of Ethnic Minorities In Britain

By Naseem Khan

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Preface

This Report has deliberately not been written in a formal style. For a start, the very diverse threads in ethnic minorities communities' arts do not lend themselves to formality. But I also felt it important that some attempt be made to communicate the flavour of events. Hence the sections on different communities are both descriptive and analytic.

For those readers who have no time or inclination to read the sections, each one is followed by a brief synopsis on the nature of the communities and by recommendations. These separate recommendations are drawn together in Section 10 under General Recommendations.

That there is overlap between sections, and between separate recommendations, is inevitable. Moreover arguments on particular points, like Asian centres or the sponsorship of non-English language drama, are important enough, and probably controversial enough, to bear some repeating.

The idea for such a Report came from its sponsors—the Arts Council of Great Britain, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and Community Relations Commission, the latter body having undertaken publication. All three bodies have assisted me with, variously, secretarial help, space for meetings, comments and information, and I am most grateful to them; not least for the complete freedom to conduct the enquiry in my own way and to write a Report which reflects my views and not necessarily theirs.

My thanks also to my Consultative Committee and to all who have supplied me with information or who have given their views; and who have often been most generous with their time and hospitality.

I would like to apologise to any groups and individuals who might have been omitted. The area of ethnic minority arts has been uncharted until this Report. At times I have thought with sympathy of the eleventh-century Tamil poet, Kamban, working on an intensive study of the Sanskrit author, Valmiki. 'I am verily like the cat,' said Kambar, 'sitting on the edge of an ocean of milk, hoping to lap it all up.' I would hope that this Report is only the beginning of an awareness of the activities, of the ocean of milk that exists.

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Foreword to Second Edition

'The Arts Britain Ignores' was first published in May 1976. To be sure, it didn't make headline news. *The Times, Guardian, New Society* and so on dealt with it respectfully; television toyed with it, but decided that they couldn't pinpoint the necessary degree of 'conflict', and gave it up. The *Sunday Times* dropped a feature in favour of an apparent scoop about Bayreuth.

Yet, without any kind of sensational reviewing and with no form of distribution, the book sold and sold. And what has been even more pleasing, has been the quality of response that I myself have had. Since publication, I've been contacted by a range of people — teachers, librarians, administrators of arts centres, organisers of local festivals, members of local authority, wanting to know what practical steps they themselves could take. My aim, in the way that I presented the information I had gathered, was to appeal to people's sense of imagination as well as to satisfy their desire for logic. This, the Report appears to have done.

I am delighted that the Commission for Racial Equality (the successor to one of the three original sponsors of 'The Arts Britain Ignores') has judged it necessary to reprint it. I take the opportunity to describe developments since the Report, and correct some errors in it.

I apportioned the credit for the establishment of an ethnic music advisor to Greater Manchester; in fact it was the City of Manchester's foresight. When I mention the Trinidad High Commission, it should of course be the High Commission of Trinidad and Tobago.

It was put to me that I underestimated the importance of the Society for Caribbean Culture, based in Earls Court's West Indian Students' Centre. If so, it was unintentional and a result of limited space. The Student Centre has a long and fine history in presenting, in the past, some of the most exciting examples of Caribbean and black American culture. In the present, they have a corps of disciplined and enthusiastic young people involved in their dance and drama activities. Soon after 'The Arts Britain Ignores' was published, I wrote on the Centre's behalf to all Caribbean governments involved, when they threatened to close it down. I still believe, as I did then, that the Centre has an important part to play.

As I anticipated, there were some groups and individuals who protested at being omitted. When a Revised Edition becomes possible, I will draw them in.

For the record, the National Federation of Bangladeshi Associations felt that my view of Bangladeshi culture was too 'Indian-orientated'. The Progressive Association of Indian Writers in the UK felt that I had not appreciated the achievements of Punjabi literature. Some Poles felt it was misleading to place their community in a chapter with Ukrainians.

I apologise for sensitivities exacerbated, but hope that those who claim bruises may feel them offset by the benefits of the Report. An account of those (for benefits there have been) is to be found in the Postscript.

Finally, I would like to say that I, in no way, withdraw the support given in the Report to the Notting Hill Carnival, despite the two years' upheavals that have followed. One of the morals of Notting Hill is that we need not fewer carnivals, but more.

Postscript

It is hard to assess the effects of a Report. At first going through the Recommendations of this one, after nearly two years, is depressing work. Where is the increased money deemed necessary? Where are the centres, the representatives on arts boards of ethnic arts? Where is the evidence of infiltration into every area of life — from subsidised theatre to the educational curriculum — that 'The Arts Britain Ignores' called for?

Are the libraries of Britain blossoming with manifestations of ethnic art? Are festivals opening out their arms to them? Has a string of vigorous ethnic cultural centres developed?

The plain answer is that they have not. And realists would say it would be naive to expect otherwise; nor, to be fair, was it ever envisaged that all the Recommendations would be implemented. They represent, say the Report's conclusions, 'the ideal situation'. Economic cutbacks, in particular at local authority level, have militated against growth.

Nevertheless, there have been some developments which should be detailed before putting them in an overall context. There has been, firstly, some growth of ethnic arts and community centres. Liverpool's new Merseyside Caribbean Centre is close neighbour to a new Pakistani cultural centre. Ghanaian teacher Felix Cobbson is now part-owner of an Essex vicarage which he is developing as a centre for African arts. Hopefully 'Aklowa' will provide a focus for the considerable African musicians that Britain is lucky enough to house. In London, the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan has recently acquired a huge West Kensington church; Omnibus, a black community threatre group that developed after the Report, has as its centre a church in Notting Hill; the Caribbean Cultural International are painstakingly renovating a house in the same area; in the East End, the Bengali Kobi Nazrul Centre is under way. Birmingham has a new black centre planned. Bristol's Inkworks, in the planning stages when the Report was written, is now a thriving vital centre. Drum is still actively involved in pushing forward its plans for a black arts centre in the middle of London.

Other existing centres have developed surely, a prime example being London's Keskidee Centre. When 'The Arts Britain Ignores' was published, it was in the painful throes of total renovation. Since then it has emerged, phoenix-like, under the resolute directorship of Oscar Abrams. Keskidee is now not only a

singularly good-looking place, but it also contains the most firmly-based and interesting black theatre company in the country. In the past year, under their artistic director Rufus Collins, the company has tackled a range of plays by black writers, that range from social comedy to symbolic surrealism to historical epic. Through the work, they are beginning to build up an impressive corporate style.

On the debit side, London's central Polish Centre still has an unfinished theatre waiting for the funds it undoubtedly deserves. The Greek-Gypriot Theatro Technis, as this goes to press, is being ousted from its North London base after four solid years of good work there and over 30 years of life.

In Spring 1977, a group of black dancers, professionally trained in a variety of dance disciplines, came together under the direction of Ray Collins (himself from the Harlem Dance Theatre). They called themselves the MAAS Movers (a name that will be explained later) and in their publicity cited a passage from 'The Arts Britain Ignores': 'We believe that a professional black dance company is desirable – firstly because it is necessary to stir the ambitions of potentially talented young people; secondly, to give more range, exposure and experience to trained dancers; thirdly, to help shape varying dance traditions behind West Indians into a visible shape; and, fourthly, to provide not only West Indians but all possible audiences with entertainment of high standard.' Were I, incidentally, to be writing that passage today, I would substitute the words 'black British' for 'West Indians', but otherwise the principle stands, and has been demonstrated to be valid by the success so far of the MAAS Movers.

Their first performances showed not only the company's potential talent, but also the response of the black community to such a development. The first showcase performance at London's Oval House attracted coachloads from outside London and had to be repeated – because of the numbers turned away – the following week. Near-capacity performances also took place in Birmingham, Leicester and Sheffield.

There have been more isolated examples of progress. The Inner London Education Authority has, for instance, appointed an Ethnic Music Advisor (Ian Hall) and is planning a Multi-Cultural Inspectorate. 'Ethnic' departments of libraries have become established, and are beginning to play an initiating role in presenting Asian culture in particular. (The London boroughs of Wandsworth and Westminster are examples.) In 1977, the Minority Rights Group became responsible for a new annual award – for ethnic minority arts. (The first award, presented at the National Theatre by Dame Peggy Ashcroft, went to the excellent black performance group, RAPP. Second prize was won by

Birmingham's East-West Community Theatre.)

There have been developments within the Chinese community, largely due to the energies of Brian Tai-Shen Wang, a tractor-mechanic from Liverpool. Through his Tai-Chi classes for the Workers Education Association there, Mr Wang evolved a form of Tai-Chi mime drama that involved both English and Chinese participants. Their first play, based on a Chinese legend, was seen both in Liverpool and at London's Royal Court Theatre (a brave and imaginative decision by that management). The production, scheduled at the time of writing, also involves live musicians.

In addition, Mr Wang was responsible for getting a show together, in early 1978, at Liverpool's well-known Walker Gallery. The work, which drew on the English response to Chinese culture as well as examples by local Chinese, ranged from painting, calligraphy and kites to noodles.

It is here I must explain and attempt to assess a development with which I myself have been closely associated, and one which, without being immodest, has been partly responsible for some of the above developments.

One of the last Recommendations of 'The Arts Britain Ignores' was the establishment of a linking, publicising and advisory service for ethnic arts. This body came officially into being in October 1976. It carried over organically from the Report. Four of the original six members of its Consultative Committee are, in addition to myself, its directors: Norman Beaton, Peter Blackman, Ravi Jain and Shantu Maher. In 1977, Tadek Jarski, formerly manager of London's Polish Centre, joined the board. The organisation is called MAAS — Minorities' Arts Advisory Service, and also an oblique reference to the Caribbean word for 'carnival'. There were two members of staff when it started — myself and Jamaican-born Veronica Lovindeer.

MAAS's job is to provide a focus for the varied ethnic minority arts in Britain: to put groups in contact with each other, as well as with fund-giving organisations; to publicise their activities; to advise and lobby on their behalf. It is particularly concerned with the development of grassroots cultural organisations that can form the major expression of apparently silent minorities, and helping those voices to be heard. One way of doing it is through the monthly newspaper, the ECHO, that reflects activity.

In November 1977, MAAS acquired a third worker, Patrick Berry, as London Co-Ordinator. His one-year appointment was funded jointly by the Greater London Arts Association and Greater London Council. MAAS itself has been funded by the Arts Council of Great Britain, Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Marks and Spencer and Wates Foundation.

It has been proved, without doubt, a useful service. It has provided an element of 'ethnic arts' for events as widely differing as educational conferences and village fetes. It has put promoters from Germany and New Zealand in touch

with performing groups. It has helped give groups much-needed publicity: through the ECHO, through bringing them to the attention of the national press and through MAAS's twice-weekly spots on Radio London. It has helped get representation on Southern Arts Association, Camden's Arts and Libraries Sub-Committee and Drama Panel and Community Arts Committee of the Arts Council. It has helped find funding and tutors for groups (though neither as often as necessary). It has helped the black dance group, the MAAS Movers, develop, as well as itself directly organise a tour by the splendid Ghanaian dance group Dabuo; through its subsidiary, Indigo, (and the hard-working Ellis Rothenberg) it organised two tours of first-class Indian classical dancers.

At the same time, MAAS has been in a unique situation to have an overview of ethnic arts and the response to them. Undoubtedly the climate of opinion *has* changed. Ethnic arts are now 'categorised', and consideration of them by funding and sponsoring bodies is seen as necessary, legitimate and, often, unexceptional. Two years ago it was necessary to explain what ethnic arts were, and to overcome, on occasions, both resistance and derision. That is no longer necessary. The Report and the efforts of its sponsors — the then Community Relations Commission, Arts Council and Gulbenkian Foundation — to see that it reached the right quarters have been largely responsible for that breakthrough. And MAAS's own existence has meant that the sympathy and interest created by the Report has been able to be built upon.

Nevertheless, it has proved impossible, during MAAS's fifteen-month life not to be hit by frustration as well as elation. There *is* a change in the climate; there *is* a growing and incresingly sophisticated body of work. At the same time, the machinery for coping with has not significantly adapted.

The 'new' body of work must be reflected in, firstly, increased arts budgets. It is courting cynicism and frustration to invite groups to meet, for example, regional arts associations, if they are then told that unfortunately funds are too inadequate to meet their needs.

Hopes were raised by the establishment of the Visiting Arts Unit (VAU) — a unit funded jointly by the Arts Council, British Council, Foreign Office and Gulbenkian Foundation, and charged with the task of helping foreign artists to exhibit or perform in Britain. MAAS hears regularly of and from first-class performers who could not only help the arts of ethnic minorities from a common background develop, but also provide much pleasure to the host-community However, so far the VAU has failed to realise its potential.

Without an extended survey such as was undertaken for the first edition of 'The Arts Britain Ignores', it is impossible to state categorically that local authority is, overall, dragging its feet in supporting ethnic arts. Some authorities have responded positively to the Report, such as South Yorkshire County Council who instituted an ambitious 'Interfolk' ethnic arts festival. But

MAAS hears more of examples of obduracy or obtuseness, such as one local authority refusing to consider funding a folk dance event because the group's members did not belong to Equity. Other areas of help still notably lacking from local authority – as far as reports to MAAS indicate – are finding premises (short-life or otherwise) and encouraging youth/amateur arts projects.

The issue of premises is likely to become even more important in the future, particularly with the availability of Job Creation funds. It is to be hoped that in particular local authority and the Housing the Arts and Arts Centres sections of the Arts Council will reflect that shift of concern.

Many things need to be done (many of which are spelled out in the Recommendations of 'The Arts Britain Ignores'). Hopefully the Advisory Committee on Ethnic Minority Arts set up by the CRE in early 1978 will provide a push for more implementation. The Committee represents a declaration of intent that the new CRE intends to be more active in support of ethnic arts, and not in funding alone. It is a welcome development. Eighteen months after the first publication of the Report, it is no longer a question of the arts Britain 'ignores' Britain is now aware of them. What it needs to do now is to cater for them.

If all the performances that took place among ethnic minority communities last year had been gathered together in one place, they would have kept a middle-sized theatre going for the entire year. 1975 saw two major West Indian street carnivals, processions for Chinese New Year in London, Manchester and Middlesbrough, runs for fourteen West Indian and African plays, three Bengali plays and dance-dramas, about twelve mass-attended Urdu poetry evenings, a tour of a Greek-Cypriot comic drama group, productions of three Gujarati plays, two Hindi ones and an Armenian production, and copious performances of Bengali, Cypriot, Indian, Ukrainian, Polish and Serbian folk song and dance groups. In addition a variety of music recitals as well as music and dance classes took place. These figures represent merely what has been turned up by this Report. The likelihood is that they are too low.

The extent, however, to which these activities are known or even supported by the host-community is minimal.

Ethnic minority arts are an energetic but struggling sub-culture. On the whole they exist for the communities alone—necessarily, since little encouragement is given them to expand. The problems they face are those of neglect: lack of premises to rehearse, lack of comparable back-up that is afforded to equivalent native British groups, lack of acceptance within the arts structure and lack of exposure. And although the level of activity is, as demonstrated, high, unless steps are taken it is likely to decline. Increased costs of travelling, transport, premises, costumes, cannot but sap the dedication of groups. Lack of outlets will mean that work is kept at a self-contained amateur level. It is likely to become repetitive and eventually irrelevant. In that way we will have killed off a vigorous growth that has every sign of being able to contribute significantly to the cultural life of society as a whole.

The literature on the so-called problems of immigration is vast—some of them genuine ones of mutual accommodation, many part of general inner-city difficulties: shortage of housing, educational facilities and general amenities. Whatever the category, immigrants and their offspring are presented, particularly in the media, at a disadvantage, offering at best a conundrum to be valiantly solved, at worst an incursion that will hopefully be ejected. In few instances are the advantages of immigration recognised.

Apart from direct economic advantages—in the health services and in various unpleasant jobs that the host-community prefers not to do—the beneficial results of immigration can be seen at an immediate level in the streets of virtually any town in Britain. Food is an effective ambassador. Since the last war, Asian, Chinese and Cypriot restaurants have increased enormously. Moreover there are indications that what began as merely cheap food of variable quality is now being regarded with more discrimination. Food columns in the newspapers and restaurant guides now make some attempt to understand different cooking methods and assess the products critically. A popular Chinese diners' club aims to educate English palates and thence to induce Chinese restaurateurs to strive for quality. Customers in Indo-Pakistani restaurants now have a reasonably clear idea of what they want to eat, rather than going timidly by the waiter's advice.

In the arts, a similar process of acceptance and discernment has yet to take place. Very few local authorities or regional arts associations have any informed knowledge of—or much interest in—ethnic arts in their areas. Indeed even following up replies from local community relations officers, it became increasingly clear how superficial their knowledge frequently was. Cultural activities seemed often to be viewed as a rather colourful local custom. Few cro's were aware of their potential, problems or even rights.

As far as local authorities were concerned, the most common reply to queries about support was that they made no separate provision for ethnic minorities (beyond the sum granted to the local community relations council): that they were considered as part of their provision for their people at large. This means, for instance, that youth clubs are funded and not either particular ethnic community youth clubs or activities in them attractive to certain minorities, that community centres are open to all, that local authority sponsored entertainment is theoretically for a general common denominator.

The principle is, on the face of it, a worthy one. But looked at more closely it proves paradoxically to lead to effective discrimination. Communities have certain talents, tastes, traditions that need consideration for them to develop. The line of 'non-discrimination' means that they are ignored.

It has been claimed that attempts to foster ethnic minority arts are divisive: that they will lead to the perpetuation of differences that will disappear—given a generation or two—leading to a happy, harmonious and homogenous society. That belief disregards three factors—firstly the demonstrated needs of new-British. In the oldest immigration looked at—Poles and Ukrainians—it is striking how important their parents' own original culture still is to young people. It is a point of definition that in no way prevents them from identifying otherwise with society at large. For more recent newcomers, particularly coloured children, it is even more important to learn the positive aspects of what is

commonly counted a disadvantage. Similarly this is a healthy lesson for the whole host-community.

Secondly, Britain is by no means homogenous. In the past it has always grown through cultural accretions. In the present, modes of life, expressions and customs differ both between classes and regions. Indeed, there seems currently to be a move away from the middleclass South of England stereotype of the Britisher, to more recognition of the character of particular regions (such as Scotland and Wales) on the one hand, and of individual communities (through the work of community artists and the Arts Council's involvement) on the other hand.

Thirdly, even if we were able to iron out differences, would we really wish to do so? The arts in Britain and internationally have always gained and developed through a creative response to new influences, from Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals to the use made by Picasso of African art. The difference today is that we have proponents of various arts within our midst; there is no need to travel. Not only could ethnic arts contribute to British arts, but they are also a possible source of enjoyment for all. Who would wish the splendid Notting Hill West Indian Carnival which gives delight to thousands eradicated?

Notting Hill is a major spectacle, a mass-attraction, that involves scores of musicians, dancers and street-vendors and thousands of spectator-participants, and one that for a short time in the year turns an area into an exhuberant copy of the Caribbean. Its virtue is that it not only revitalises life, but that it also provides a bridge for the indigenous British. For a couple of days it is possible to participate in a 'jump-up', to share in an experience that is no common and everyday English thing, and—possibly—to catch some understanding of the enjoyments and values that gave rise to that form.

Many of the ethnic arts combine those multiple functions. They add variety and colour to the texture of life, as well as stretching knowledge and understanding. That extra dimension was for instance refreshingly demonstrated at the Commonwealth Institute recently where a number of school-groups had contributed to the Third World theme. There were paintings, films, music groups, dance groups. The group of young dancers and musicians, trained by Ghanaian Felix Cobbson, that very competently performed West African dances, had not an African (or West Indian) amongst them. The junior West Indian steel band absorbed white English children, as did the Indian dance group. A few weeks later, at West Norwood Library, a packed audience of both native-British and Indian-British watched a performance of a Tagore dance-drama that included one non-Indian in the group. The presence of ethnic minorities afford the chance of not only seeing fresh cultural forms, but also of learning them. This is an opportunity, an aspect of a multi-racial society,

that should be fostered and encouraged. The result would be a far more genuine meeting of races, based on respect for achievements and values.

If ethnic minority arts were supported far more positively, the question of perpetuating differences would in fact be lessened. Differences are only heightened, and arts made static, when communities are made to turn in on themselves through rejection. At such a time preservation of a rather rigid past becomes important and the arts suffer. Funding and sponsoring the ethnic arts should have the opposite effect, if done sensitively. Although developments only come from a sure traditional base, the object should not be to preserve that alone. Since cultural expressions spring out of social conditions, they should change with conditions, otherwise merely the effect is preserved without the cause. For instance, several of our ethnic arts come from rural roots; they are village songs and dances celebrating harvest or rainfall and so on. When, however, farmers become Midlands charge-hands or even more important the children of charge-hands (possibly accountants or teachers), the picture changes; the links to the situation behind the song becomes tenuous. Preserved culture has, like dried fruits, a certain limited attractiveness. As a sole and staple diet it leaves much to be desired.

Support for arts must lay stress on their development (which, with greater exposure, is anyhow likely to take place) from the firm traditional base. There are indeed some signs that such a process is occasionally taking place—in contemporary Punjabi folk song, in Ukrainian music and Polish theatre. Theatre—and particularly among black British groups and playwrights—is where one would especially hope to find, since the language is common, different sensibilities trained on new situations. Indeed this is already occurring in the work of several good dramatists, from Mustafa Matura to T-Bone Wilson.

Not all ethnic minority arts are the 'open arts' already described—the street carnivals, the steel band music and Indian dance. Polish, Greek and Bengali theatre and Urdu poetry occasions are of necessity limited to those who speak the languages. This is no argument against subsidy.

Arts funding in general is designed to create events that offer entertainment and stimulation to the population at large, who itself subsidises it through rates and taxes. Poles, Cypriots, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are no exception. Although the arts of minorities can in many cases overleap racial boundaries, the fact that they do immediately contribute to the cultural life at large should not be the sole criticism for funding ethnic minority arts.

The less open arts also deserve encouragement. They deserve it firstly because they are valid, popular and important for a section of British people. This section frequently can draw little from the general arts activity financed by the Arts Council and local authority, because of language and social differences. (Nor are they alone in this. Many of the cultural activities

supported by, say, the Arts Council—from opera to experimental music—are minority tastes, effectively inaccessible to large sections of the community.) Secondly, there are strong arguments (particularly well-voiced in the Bullock Report, 'Language for Life') for the retention of a mother-language. The possession of a second language, it felt, gives Second Generation British children an overall confidence as well as a feeling for language in general. We have also found that language and traditional literary forms can be used to make comments on a new society, hence helping people who are frequently put on the defensive come to terms with that society in their own way. Examples can particularly be found in the Indian section of this Report.

Whatever the status of an art—whether it be a potential bridge or more limited to the sustenance of a smaller community—there is a case for far more support that is currently given overall, by local authority in particular. Minorities can be divided—for cultural purposes—into consumers and producers of arts. As consumers, their tastes merit consideration. An evening of Indian film music in a local library may in any case in some areas be less of a minority taste than choral music. An evening of Bengali drama in Tower Hamlets has more relevance for a large section of that local population than olde style music hall.

As producers of arts, minority communities again deserve help—help in finding suitable premises for dance groups, music groups, theatre groups and related classes. They also need some finance—fees for tutors to keep traditions alive, toward the cost of the often very elaborate costumes and musical instruments. They need, moreover, to be used, to be given opportunities to show their work to new audiences.

Local authorities do occasionally act as sponsors to ethnic minority activities in the provision of facilities. Reading, for example, gave the town hall free for a five-day Indian arts festival in June 1974. Preston reports that 'several religious festivals have been granted permission to either parade through parts of the town or to use parts of the parks. A recent summertime Caribbean Festival was granted permission to do both'. Several libraries departments (such as Bolton, Tameside, Rotherham, Bradford) now include material in Asian, East and Central European languages. The occasional authority, such as Huddersfield and Birmingham, has hosted an East Comes West exhibition that provides examples of Asian artefacts with some explanation of the religious faiths from which they spring. Local authorities have also used the Urban Aid programme to create situations—by the establishment of ethnic minority community centres—in which the arts could develop. Provision of premises in this way is important, but what is also important is support for cultural activities within them, in terms of both funds and encouragement. This is what is lacking. Similarly developments within the education system, though welcome in themselves, need to be followed through, and related to

opportunities for young people to continue the interests they have developed after they leave school.

Nevertheless what emerges from replies from local authorities is that hardly any ongoing activity that provides entertainment for a particular section of the community (such as Bengali theatre, Ukrainian choirs or Polish children's theatre) is funded. Examples are few and far between. The London Borough of Camden does fund the theatre for Cypriots, Theatro Technis, but their £250 pa cannot be very effective, nor is it comparable to funding for another minority interest theatre in the borough, the Hampstead Theatre Club, which gets £14,000 a year from Camden. The London Borough of Lambeth funded the Black Dark and Light Theatre when it was still running, but again not as alternative civic theatre but as an amateur effort. Since the then director was trying to create a professional theatre with professional actors, he quickly ran into difficulties. All local authorities with a significant proportion of ethnic minorities were asked for details of support given to cultural activities. The total amount (from 75 replies out of 94) came to £4,254 in direct grants to cultural groups or associations.

It must be, in all fairness, stressed that this amount does not cover hidden subsidy—for instance the use of school halls, the salaries of youth officers et cetera in largely ethnic clubs, the contribution toward a building that might eventually develop a programme of cultural activities funded under the Urban Aid Programme. This £4,000-odd represents local authority grant-aid in 1974/75 to ongoing cultural activities and organisations, such as the Notting Hill Carnival, Haringey's Cyprus Week and Cardiff's Nigerian Sculpture Exhibition. It also represents only a fraction of what some local authorities spend on the arts within their boundaries. Tyne and Wear County Council, for example, will have given a probable £40,000 to amateur arts organisations in 1975/76 (in addition to the £8,000 for their Folk Festival)—ten times the amount given the previous year to both amateur and professional ethnic arts organisations by local authorities in toto.

Entertainment created by ethnic minorities for ethnic minorities are effectively unsubsidised. Ethnic arts are, in a sense, suffered; where they themselves push for facilities they can gain the free or subsidised use of halls, for instance, or permission to parade through a park. They might also be used in occasional festivals (though it is noticeable that Bedford for instance, who claimed to make no division in its inhabitants, had to go outside the town for ethnic minority performers for their multi-racial festival). But ethnic minority cultural activities are demonstrably not on a par with other local activities where funding and support is concerned.

Like the Victorians, minorities tend to make their own entertainment. The level of participation in certain areas is enviably high. Derby, for instance, has among its three hundred Ukrainians, two music groups, two folk dance groups

and a male choir. It also possesses two Indian folk dance teams, Polish and Serbian dance groups and a potential steel band. Classes for adults and children in all forms of ethnic minority music and dance are popular throughout the country with native-British as well as new-British. Again, the kind of support they receive is arbitrary and often non-existent.

Frequently local authorities reported that they had had no applications from ethnic cultural groups, sometimes in areas like Tower Hamlets, where activities do exist. There is clearly a failure of communication here as well as of initiative. To many native-British, the workings of the town hall are arcane and mysterious. For new-British they are doubly so—a fact that should be recognised and accommodated. Similarly regional arts associations have a low record of applications. (Many groups spoken to, indeed, did not know of their existence.) Only one regional arts association has a Community Arts Officer. It is a post that could valuably be established by all of them.

The assets of immigration—the acquisition of new cultural experiences, art forms and attitudes—have so far been only minimally recognised and far less encouraged. If they were, Britian would gain a far richer cultural scene, and would moreover be giving minorities their due. Unless that happens, there is no justification for calling Britain a multi-cultural society.

London's Chinatown celebrates the Year of the Dragon *courtesy, The Guardian*

Play at the Polish Centre
courtesy, POSK

Youngsters form their own steel band
courtesy, Ian Familton, West London Observer

Sikh Musicians at Sidney Stringer School & Commercial College, Coventry.
Photograph, Madan Arora

Chapter Two: Bangladeshis

In political terms, the Bangladeshi community has only just reached its fifth birthday. Before 1971 the country was Pakistan's eastern wing. In that year, a considerable amount of discontent in the province erupted into confrontation with the Government—a thousand or so miles to the West, in Rawalpindi. Made more immediate by questions about the nature of governmental structure that elections would precipitate, the confrontation rapidly led to a violent rift between East and West Pakistan, and the establishment of Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Even before secession it was clear to any visitor that there were deep differences of attitude between Bengalis in East Pakistan and the over-ridingly Punjabi culture of West Pakistan, certainly where the arts were concerned. In West Pakistan one had to travel to the country-side to hear music or see dance. There were (in 1970 when I was last there), no official cultural teaching organisations in Karachi, no public music recitals. The young Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Hyderabad students I met were more interested in Western pop or Westernised Pakistani film music (the embargo on Indian films or any interchange with India was then total) than in the indigenous music. The most thriving cultural institution was Lahore's School of Art where they were working to evolve modes of expression that connected with Islam's Arabic past.

East Pakistan, in 1970, was a different world, and a world regarded with some scorn by the average Rawalpindi Government official. It is relevant that my otherwise excellent officially sponsored tour gave me three weeks all over West Pakistan. When I suggested the Eastern wing they conceded the afterthought, but thought three days would suffice.

In fact three days served only to give an appetite. In my eventual month in East Pakistan I visited a range of arts activities, including dance classes, music schools, a museum of musical instruments, schools for promoting the songs of Tagore and the revolutionary Bengali poet Nazrul Islam, exhibitions and village potteries. Among the most exciting experiences was a visit to the Rural Development Academy at Comilla where they were concerned essentially with community stimulation. In actual terms this meant devising structures for community involvement in which new methods of farming particularly could be aired, rejected or implemented. It was an impressive

experiment to involve villagers in necessary social change that they themselves would then shape, rather than have imposed upon them. The Academy drew in not only the farmers, but also women, religious leaders and children. It was also concerned to preserve, develop and make productive village crafts, seeing them as part of the villagers' own identity. The attitude seemed typical of the province.

In many ways the province seemed to have found a happy balance between the cultural austerity of Western Pakistan and the prolixity of India. Islam was still the overriding factor—the fasting period of Moharram was very evident in Dacca—but the East Pakistanis felt free to draw on the wealth of Bengali culture.

Ultimately it is impossible to draw a dividing line between the largely Hindu Indian Bengalis and the Muslim Bangladeshis. They themselves consider the two parts one (as they were till only twenty-two years ago).

Calcutta for Bangladeshis, particularly the older generation, is still the Bengali cultural cradle, and exchanges—especially in the field of poetry—always prove highly successful.

In Britain, the potential audience for a Bengali function is therefore not limited to the Bangladesh community alone, but takes in all Bengalis from whichever side of the border. More, the Bangladeshi ability to synthesise, means that links between them and the Indian community as a whole—at a certain level—are more feasible, and that functions could conceivably draw a wider audience than Bengalis.

This being so, it is at first surprising that Bangladeshi cultural life in Britain is not more active. One would expect it to spring from the organisations that exist and to have as its focus (as do both Indian and Cypriot communities) the National Day. For Bangladesh, this is December 16th.

As it is, very little regular activity exists, and what does is centred in London where over 50% of the community lives. Those out of London Bangladeshi organisations who have responded to my enquiries concentrate entirely—except for the Greater Manchester Mohalla Samiti who would like to start dance classes—on religious matters and social welfare problems. Where there are hopes of starting other activities, like music and dance, difficulties in finding instructors and premises, as well as the money to buy instruments, form a sizeable hurdle.

The latter is one reason for this apparent cultural quietness. Compounding it is the fact that the bulk of Bangladeshi immigrants—estimates vary from a total of 125,000 by the National Federation of Bangladeshi Associations to the High Commission's 50,000-60,000—came from villages to industrial manual labour and lack the middle-class experience of organisation.

It is also a heavily male dominated immigration. Women form only 15% or so of the total numbers. The tendency therefore to set up cultural

activities, very much designed to cater to family consumption, is lower than in say, the Indian communities. Moreover, it is most often from among the women that dance and folk song teachers are found, teachers like Jiwan Nissar Buksh who teaches Bengali language, as well as songs, dances and Koranic studies to children in Finsbury Park, Mrs Chowdhury, the instructor of a children's dance group Sura Bitan, and Mrs Tapan Gupta with her weekly Harrow dance class and the cultural group The Tagoreans.

Social class is particularly important. Alay Rasul, President of the National Federation of Bangladesh Associations, assesses that 40% of Bangladeshis work in restaurants; the remainder are in factories ranging from the East End of London's rag trade to big industrial concerns. The middle-class is at present still small (doctors, accountants, teachers, students, restaurant owners). It is, however, organised. The proprietor of a well-known central London restaurant is President of London's Bengali National Cultural Society, for example. Manchester's Bangladesh Welfare Association is run by another large local restauranteur and hotelier. Bengali associations of caterers, doctors and other professions exist. The cultural evening in Hampstead arranged to coincide with 1975's Durga Puja (Hindu Bengal's especially loved celebration of the God Rama's victory over evil) relied heavily on the talents of middle-class Bengalis and their wives.

The scope of these activities is limited. Bengali cultural functions are rather family affairs. You tend to meet the same people at each. Chats go on all over the hall about families and friends and films and trips back home.

Very few outsiders permeate, nor are they very seriously considered as a potential audience.

It is likely that this comfortable hermetically-sealed quality also bears some relation to the extremely sporadic nature of Bangladeshi/Bengali cultural activities at present. There is little movement: a singer and dancer's repertoire becomes well-known over the years; and the audience's pleasure, it is easy to suspect, comes as much from the reassuring sameness as from the quality of work. Dance classes, which tend to embellish a young girl with another socially acceptable female talent, could do with the challenge of visits by professional groups.

There are however, signs that members of the community themselves are realising this static state of affairs. August 1975 saw the first English tour of a Bengali cultural group. Called the Loka Bharati and stemming from Calcutta, it was in fact a scaled-down version of a group that was then playing to enthusiastic audiences in Finland and France. Wisely the Bengali National Cultural Society decided to bring some of the artists over, and set up a national tour. In order to get visas at short notice, the group had to commit themselves to free performances, (with the result that the BNCS is left with £1000 of debts).

The Loka Bharati are a group of singers and musicians who double as dancers. They are led by a redoubtable man called Nirmalendu Chowdhury, whose fine singing voice is as powerful as his personality.

Apart from the group's charm and musical ability, their greatest and most striking asset is their material. It is not classical, but folk, and serves to remind one what an extraordinarily beautiful folk tradition Bengal possesses. Not a whisper of Tagore—that well-publicised Bengali giant philosopher-poet—just river songs, harvest and village dances. It was a commendable gesture that the group did not confine itself to Bengal—they brought in a smattering of Gujarati folk dancing, a fine Urdu lyrical 'ghazal', a Naga dance, and a Bhangra dance (although Punjabis, with their virile disrespect for what they see as the effeminate Bengalis, might have smiled in their beards at this version of it). Nevertheless, the gesture would have been appreciated.

In all the group did twenty-five shows in Britain. Apart from London, they appeared in Luton, Coventry, Newcastle, Glasgow, Sheffield, Scunthorpe, Bradford and Birmingham. They varied their programme according to their audience. For a largely Punjabi audience in Glasgow, it was given a greater Punjabi bias. At Bradford a Pakistani audience refused to go home at the end of the show wanting more, more Urdu ghazals. 'They came out with pound notes all over me,' said Chowdhury, recalling the eventual session with about seventy older men that went on till three in the morning. In Sheffield the audience—a result of wider publicity—was fifty percent English, so the programme could be more comprehensive. On an average, claimed the organisers, the audience for each show was 400, giving the group a total audience in Great Britain of 10,000.

Another reason for its artistic success beyond the quality and nature of the work, was the way in which it was staged. Chowdhury has understood very well (as has Jamaica's Olive Lewin in a similar folk world) that folk songs cannot simply be transported onto a stage and retain their original essence.

He makes a deliberate attempt to use a stage and at times as in the River Boatman Song, the auditorium too. And although the lights at Islington Town Hall were unsophisticated—bathing the performers in alternating lurid shades of primary colours—he was at least attempting to use the equipment available. Chowdhury is also keen to devise new settings for several voices, as well as realising that young audiences have different tastes. For the Bengali young, explained Chowdhury's dashing son, the old lingering poetic melodies are out. He himself, he said, had 'found the rocks and the pops' and now wanted something more catchy.

It is a reaction to be found amongst all Asian young in this country. 'Classical music bores us, let's face it,' said a Kojak-bald young Indian pop musician in Southall. Their brand of music, and the brand of the two Indian pop groups at 1975's Asian Youth Festival (described in the Indian section of

this Report), is amplified rock with Asian antecedents. Their instruments, apart from percussion, are Western. Their lyrics are sung in Hindi, Punjabi or English. It's a vigorous stylish growth that undoubtedly could do with more local co-operation and backing.

The groups' problems are legion, from rehearsal space to storage space to transport problems. (Since they mainly appertain to the Indian communities, a larger section on this is to be found in that part of the Report.) They could be alleviated were youth clubs more open, realising both the possibilities of this east-west synthesis and the kind of schemes—like the National Association of Boys Clubs' Money for Music awards—that could encourage it.

The folk tradition—as disseminated in the Loka Bharati work—is not irrelevant to the new young music. Chowdhury himself is very much aware of the disadvantages of mechanised societies. One of the objects of his work is to provide a bridge between the urban and rural worlds, having become increasingly conscious of the contribution that village culture can make to city-dwellers both in Asia and internationally. This re-discovery of a folk tradition is also common to the Western musical scene. Certainly anyone going round the country listening to the songs of various communities—Cypriot, Ukrainian, Polish in particular—cannot help regretting that their freshness and buoyant simplicity are not widely known in the community that houses them.

The Bengali National Cultural Society hopes to establish a Bengali Folk Culture Centre, using extended visits by Loka Bharati as a core. They also believe, and it is a convincing point of view, that among the local Bengali community there are many singers, musicians, potential dancers, people who still remember the songs and skills of their villages. They would like to discover and draw on that reservoir, and use it to train Bengali, non-Bengali and non-Asian youngsters.

If this should take shape, the product should be noted and used by local borough entertainments officers in particular. At present our non-English ethnic traditions usually receive public display as a result of minority group initiative. All too often they themselves underplay the general appeal of their own traditions.

(An example was the fine Ukrainian afternoon in October, 1975 at Hammersmith Town Hall which seemed attended overwhelmingly by Ukrainians.) In reality, folk music and song from anywhere in the world, can be moving and attractive. Certainly within the British Isles we have a source of pleasure that has been barely tapped.

We would like to see local borough and district authorities make an effort to seek out and patronise local or national ethnic minority groups. Where possible we would like to see them used in schools, particularly if workshops could be arranged in conjunction with a performance. Groups like Loka

Bharati would be delighted for instance, to explain the traditions and stories that lie behind their material.

The example of this particular group is heartening in that it did make a decided effort to reach a non-parochial audience. It played not only to the Bengalis and not only to the middle-class.

In a different way, another organisation—the Bengali Artists Association —is trying for the same ends. The difference is that though they aim wider than the small middle-class, it is still aimed predominantly at Bengalis; also the group works in a specific area—in East London.

The Bengali Artists Association has been in existence as a number of individuals under differing names for very many years—a phenomenon that anyone who knows the shifting nature of Asian organisations will understand. The present association crystallised however as a result of one of those all too rare conjunctions between local government and local people.

The example of Bethnal Green Adult Education Institute is one that could be usefully studied by any education authority which now has a sizeable immigrant population in its area.

Mrs Kundri Clarke, Head of the Community Development Department, explained that for many years the Institute had run General Education classes in the borough, funded by the Inner London Education Authority. Ten years ago they began to respond to the new Bengali presence in the area by starting English classes for immigrants. The attendance was initially low (about twenty) and the general attitude distrustful. Sensibly, the Institute took the initiative and both contacted local Bengali community leaders and made efforts to publicise the facilities available. A hiatus then took place until a national disaster in what was then West Pakistan. The community then approached the Institute and said they'd like to use the premises for a charity concert. The confidence and goodwill generated, said Mrs Clarke, by that successful function led to increased attendance at their current classes and also to a demand for more. First to be added was drama, then music and poetry and then English taught by a Bengali speaker.

The Institute now hosts drama classes every evening except Sunday, taught by the Bengali Artists' own choice, Mr Amar Bose. Classes attract, says Shah Rehman the production co-ordinator, about twenty-five students. On Saturday, he says, up to two hundred come simply to watch, about three-quarters of whom are illiterate and for whom it is a major part of the week's entertainment.

It is interesting (though not contradictory) that Mr Shah Rehman's account of the establishment of the drama classes differs somewhat from Mrs Clarke's. His group, originally called The Orientals, had been putting on Bengali plays since a production of 'Siraj-ud-Daullah' at the Barbican Theatre in 1963, and had from the beginning been searching unsuccessfully for a base. In 1968

'Paki-bashing' hit the headlines. 'Until then,' he said, 'no one knew there was a Pakistani community. Then all of a sudden it seemed to us that people were coming down to us to help from the heaven, to every corner.'

Whatever the impetus, the result is an impressive one, drawing broadly on the local working-class Bengali population. Their 'parish', reckons Mr Rehman, takes in 7,000-8,000 Bangladeshis spread out over Whitechapel, Aldgate, Bethnal Green, Mile End and Bow, up to Cable Street. Music classes take place three evenings a week, and are in tabla, harmonium, flute, guitar, the one-stringed ektara, and kanjuni (cymbals). Poetry workshops seem at present less popular, but they have still led to activities like an evening reading Bengali poetry (with translations) in a Bethnal Green pub. Mr Rehman said that it went very well—though he added honestly that the audience had mainly been converted English friends. Mushairas (the Urdu mass poetry evenings described in the Pakistani section of the report) are apparently not particularly popular among the ex-East Pakistanis of East London. Rehman regarded them dismissively as 'middleclass' but it is also possible that knowledge of Urdu locally is not very great, despite Pakistan's attempts in pre-secession days to make it a national language. Most of the local Bangladeshis come from the rural area of Sylhet and speak the dialect Sylheti as their mother language.

As well as its cultural and social welfare classes, the Institute organises classes in Bengali, Arabic and Urdu, the second taught by an imam. For this, as for all other cultural activities excluding drama/poetry, there is a small complement of European students.

What is striking about Bethnal Green's programme—unique, so far as we know, in the British Isles—is the way in which it has been sensitive to both the needs and the character of the community. Mrs Clarke would be the first person to deny that they have a blue-print and this in itself is significant. As far as their East London territory is concerned, however, they have made a distinct effort to understand and work with local Bangladeshi structures. Over a number of years, for instance, they have slowly managed to gain the trust of the female population and the approval of male relatives for the women's activities. It has been a slow business. For the first women's afternoon at the Institute Mrs Clarke cleared the premises, as she'd promised, of all men, down to the caretaker. Only the voluntary Bangladeshi female social workers turned up—to check out, for the women, that conditions were really as had been promised. The very first participatory women's function took place the following week. Now they have thriving informal classes in cookery, welfare, dress-making and English: not all of these are at the Institute but at any place where the women will naturally gather, at hospital clinics, welfare clinics and primary schools.

However shining an example the Institute and the work of the Bengali

Artists Association might be, there are still problems. Some stem from the nature of the local Bangladeshi community, others from lack of further aid from local and central government forces.

Although I began by commenting on the generally less austere interpretation of Islam by Bengali Muslims, especially with regard to culture, it is important to realise that they are still a Muslim community. Affairs of the mosque—by far Britain's wealthiest Pakistani and Bangladeshi organisations—are centrally important. And though Bangladeshis will usually contribute generously towards a new mosque, it is highly unlikely that the mosque itself will subsidise the cultural activities of its worshippers. If it would, cultural groups would have no problems of finance. However, even speculating is like asking the Roman Catholic Church to support a string of chorus girls.

The influence of the mosque is felt in East London not only in the negative aspect of lack of financial help. It also can affect audiences and participants. When the Bengali drama group first began to give public performances, orthodox elders apparently campaigned house by house against the work. Originally the group shied away from producing publicity leaflets, particularly leaflets with photographs of actors since representation of the human form is forbidden by Islamic law. For their more recent production however—a historial drama, 'Tippoo Sultan', which had a two evenings' run at ILEA's Curtain Theatre in Whitechapel—they felt confident enough even to show a woman on their leaflet. There was indeed protest from mosque-elders, but by no means so organised as seven years before.

However liberal the group may sound, they still have to take into account some orthodox attitudes. Women, for instance, may now be shown on the leaflets, but they do not attend the drama classes. There is, in addition to Islamic dictates, a general distaste in the subcontinent for allowing one's women folk to be exposed on the stage, very much affected by the common stories heard about the licentiousness of film actresses. For instance, Harbhajan Virdi's now defunct Indian drama youth group, Indiyouth, in Southall could not enlist girls. It's also worth realising that it is only relatively recently that Indian girls of good family were able to learn classical dance and perform it in public. Its associations had previously all been with the 'devadasis' who were South Indian temple prostitutes. It is significant that the only Asian community that has no difficulties in recruiting actresses is that from East Africa. The Whitechapel drama group does include women (there were three in 'Tippoo Sultan's thirty-six strong cast), but they came in at a late stage of rehearsals.

These are problems for the community to sort out at their own pace. Outside agencies, however could do far more to support the cultural products of the Institute and other possible similar schemes. ILEA pay all the tutors, sensibly

not insisting that they be British-qualified. In a sense they also subsidise the performances, by providing premises at an economic rate.

However, what is still lacking is help towards production costs and advice/support for a measure of touring. 'Tippoo Sultan' cost the group about £300, all of which was raised by the community. Although rather statically acted, the care taken over the production was great. Props, costumes and sets were gorgeous and immaculate, the vivid colours all looking rather like a display in the window of an Asian sweetmeat seller.

They have applied, at intervals and unsuccessfully, for help from High Commissions, the local Tower Hamlets community relations council (Council of Citizens), and the Greater London Arts Association. There was, they said, a general feeling that it was a waste of a stamp to write to the local borough council. Clearly, however, the drama activities enjoy broad community support. The Bangladesh High Commission's Cultural Attaché commented approvingly on the amount of older people they managed to draw to their performances. The activities also not only satisfy a need for Bengali entertainment, met minimally by Bengali films on Sunday in the Tottenham Court Road, but also train youngsters and provide experience of a new art-form to ex-villagers.

A large part of their audiences have not been inside a theatre before. If English groups are supported—for instance London's Bubble Theatre—to open out theatre to non-theatregoing native-English audiences, then surely a group that plays to new Bengali-British audiences deserves some support?

In general it seems that there is a feeling that subsidy should only be given to professional English-language artistic activities. It is easy to understand the logic of that, based on the feeling that no 'exclusive' arts should be supported, and Bengali drama necessarily excludes non-Bengali speakers. But where a community is excluded from participation in English events due to both social customs and grasp of language—surely activities relevant to them should qualify for support? It is harsh to deny them their own entertainment, sentencing them to a bleak limbo. Nor—since they also pay rates and taxes to local and national government—is it just.

Subsidising, for example, Bengali language drama is not a matter of pouring money into an isolated corner. The function of such groups is more than the particular production. They serve rather to give young people a respect for their own backgrounds—and however anglicised they may seem to the outsider, that is still extremely important. They also give them an insight into an artistic discipline and process. They also provide a much-needed entertainment for a working class stratum that has little else offered to them. Obviously, communities prefer to support themselves whenever possible, but where money is needed, we believe strongly that it should be found at both a local and a national level. At a local level we would like to see such groups supported

both by regional arts associations and local authorities; we would like to see local community relations councils pressing for support for Bengali arts by these bodies. At a national level we believe that they should come within the remit of the Community Arts committee of the Arts Council of Great Britain.

This particular group would like to tour its productions occasionally, to other Bengali centres—particularly Birmingham and Manchester. They have already in the past taken productions to St Alban's and Luton Technical College. The mechanics of touring have become increasingly expensive, though, and without a grant they could certainly not manage it effectively. However, a well-organised and well-publicised tour would help to give the at present fragmented Bangladeshi communities a greater cohesiveness and sense of belonging. Loka Bharati's tour shows what demand exists, and the response that could meet such an initiative.

Also, as the Poles have demonstrated with their picturesque folk opera, 'Cracovians and Highlanders', it is possible for communities with a strong music and dance tradition to devise shows that are accessible to audiences that do not know the particular language. The Bengali Artists' Association apparently usually include music in their shows: 'Tippoo Sultan' was an exception. If the use of music and song could be developed, there is a possibility that they could draw in interested non-Bengali speaking English audiences.

What is needed at present is encouragement for Bengali cultural activity to broaden out to reach beyond the middle classes and beyond a specific geographic location. Part of this includes capital schemes like the Bengali National Cultural Society's interesting idea for a folk centre (that could possible develop into a multi-national folk centre). Part of it involves help for grassroots schemes to stabilise and extend the work of local groups. In the current economic climate clearly the second would be a priority. But at the same time, it should not be forgotten how artistic standards rise by emulation. If a folk centre with strong regional links emerged that could host Asian folk artists of quality, it would affect the work of local groups, as well as providing a source of pleasure and new knowledge to the host-community.

We also believe that the establishment of an Indian classical music and dance centre would do much to increase the health of Bengali cultural activities. This recommendation is set out in detail in the Indian section of the Report. The benefits to Bengali communities are that it would provide a pool of trained teachers, much needed at present by grassroots organisations, as well as giving more outlets to the more professional middle-class activities. It would also provide a stimulus to existing artistic activity by hosting visits of musicians and dancers from India.

BANGLADESHIS

Summary and Recommendations

No official figures exist for Bangladeshis since when the 1971 Census was taken their country was still part of Pakistan. The Pakistan and Bangladesh total is 140,000 of which the Bangladesh High Commission believes 60,000 are Bangladeshis. The National Federation of Bangladesh Associations sets it higher at 120,000. In some cases—particularly in well-established middle-class cultural evenings—there is a considerable overlap, despite religious difference, with Indian Bengalis.

There are two main desirable focuses of attention: to help existing middle-class activities to develop, and to help articulate entertainment by and for the working classes.

We recommend:

1 that a centre of Indian classical music and dance be established (see General Recommendations: Arts Council/12) in order to rationalise existing activity, provide a standard and produce trained teachers. This should be funded by ILEA, Arts Council, RRC, GLC and Greater London Arts Association and have links—where visiting artists are concerned—with the British Council.

2 that the project of a folk arts institute (comprising music, dance, crafts) be supported by the Arts Council, GLC, RRC, GLAA, ILEA and be encouraged to take in all Asian folk arts, and deal with training and workshops as well as performance.

3 that any visits of Bengali/Bangladeshi folk ensembles be centrally sponsored by the Arts Council and encouraged to tour in conjunction with regional arts associations.

4 that community-based Bengali-language theatre groups, be given funding by local authority on the basis of the service they offer a section of the community who cannot find their entertainment in arts subsidised for the community as a whole.

5 that such theatre groups should, where they desire, be given advice and assistance by the local regional arts association to tour.

6 that civic theatres encourage local drama, music and dance groups to use their premises on a Sunday night.

7 that voluntary-run dance and music classes with proven support be funded (vis-à-vis instructors' fees) by either the local Adult Education or Youth Services, whichever is most applicable.

8 that help be given to them by the appropriate local authority services to find premises if necessary.

9 that performing dance groups be considered eligible for grants towards musical instruments, bells, costumes and transport by local authority.

10 that cultural groups be encouraged by arts officers of local authority and regional arts associations to participate in host-community festivals and competitions (such as amateur music and drama, and local authority festivals).

11 that occasions like Bengali dance-dramas be given schools performances.

12 where there is a strong case and full community support for a Bangladeshi community centre, to take in educational, cultural and social activities, that it be supported by Home Office and local authority.

Chapter Three: Chinese

For most Londoners, the Chinese equal Gerrard Street. Indeed, for many Chinese in Britain at large, the new Chinatown, crammed into a few streets behind Piccadilly Circus, is the nearest approximation to home that they can find in England. In 1972, the last issue of 'Overseas Chinese in Britain Year Book' to be published (before costs became prohibitive) listed 28 Chinese restaurants in that area, two Chinese doctors, an accountant, 15 clubs and associations, 19 Chinese firms and shops and one cinema. Since 1972, Chinese restaurants, noodle houses and supermarkets have visibly increased, spreading south into Lisle Street and north into Shaftesbury Avenue. There is little need, said one Chinese entrepreneur, for the Gerrard Street population ever to move out of the area. Indeed, very many prefer not to leave that small familiar geographical patch—a fact that creates problems for proposed cultural activities. Space is limited, and one project for a dance class collapsed because of lack of local premises. All needs are met in Chinatown—jobs, foodshops, entertainment, and above all information—a village network of alliances, personalities and interconnected concerns. The area also provides a focus for Britain's 69,000 Chinese (though this figure covers people, such as Malays, not ethnically Chinese). Out-of-town restaurateurs come there for supplies, others visit it at weekends for the entertainment, contacts, cooking, for a place where Chinese are actually the majority, where signs and menus are in Chinese and the language on the street is Cantonese.

The great majority of Britain's Chinese come from Hong Kong, and increasingly from the poorer New Territories. Their traditional containment, part of the West's image of the Chinese, is as much the result of lack of English as anything else. Few of the adult working classes are adept in the English language.

The Chinese businesses and restaurants offer an immediate protection, demanding a minimum amount of English. After some years of working up to 70 hours a week, restaurant-workers could have put by enough to pay the deposit on a take-away food or fish and chip shop. Again contact with English customers is at a verbal minimum. Anyone who has travelled particularly through the north of England could not have failed to notice how in each small industrial town there is now almost invariably a Chinese takeaway or chip shop, open late—long after anything else comparable has closed down for the night.

The impression in both Gerrard Street and in the north is of isolation: in Gerrard Street and its surrounds one finds protected isolation; otherwise it's isolation, pure and simple. Brian Jackson and Anne Garvey's study 'Chinese Children' (published by the Advisory Centre for Education) notes the phenomenon outside London. 'Chinese in Britain are loosely organised. If there are enough of them in one area, they will respond: mah-jong afternoons for the ladies, with tea and chat in between. The men will have some sort of gambling centre, usually in the "leading" restaurant in the town. For the rest, there is little else. There might be a late-night film if the group of Chinese is large or enterprising enough to finance one, but that is about all. The life is dreary, unrelieved and full of anxiety.'

Jackson and Garvey's central concern is—obviously—with children. But the picture of the domestic life is distinctly relevant to this Report. The Chinese contacted by the ACE study authors were predominantly take-away owners, set doggedly on establishing themselves by incredibly hard work, and on improving their children's lot. Adult life and responsibility starts young for the children. At seven, says the ACE study, they can be serving in the take-aways, sometimes until one in the morning; the ethic behind it is not exploitation, but the strongly-held belief—among people whose own lives have been an unremitting struggle—that children should learn early on to participate in family responsibilities. Small wonder that on both sides of the ideological fence now in the Gerrard Street area—from both people involved in the Maoist workers' clubs and from the so-called 'right-wing'—there is concern about their young people.

The elders—throughout this country largely restaurant-workers—are isolated from the mainstream of English life both by their conditions of work and their lack of English. Their children similarly have narrow horizons offered to them. Jackson and Garvey pointed out how little background research has gone into the teaching of English to Chinese children (as opposed to Asian children), how their inherent quietness and obedience makes it easy for their problems to be belittled. (However, it is worth recording that young Chinese people I contacted saw this as a bit of racial stereotyping. 'We are,' said one girl, 'quietly rebellious.') In many ways the children are marooned between two worlds, neither speaking good enough Cantonese (or Hakka) to feel Chinese nor good enough English to be accepted by their classmates. At the same time there is apparently a strong feeling that they want more out of life than working, like their parents, in catering. The most unfortunate section are, by general consensus, the boys who came here at the age of fifteen, had a useless year of English schooling, and then found themselves on the labour market. It is this group that left-wing clubs like the Chinese Workers Mutual Aid Society, as well as the cinema owners, who find them shoving their way in free, see as the immediate problem.

In these conditions of economic struggle, it is not suprising that 'culture' in the traditional form, takes a back seat. Music groups have proved unstable, dance a non-starter, and classes for traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy appeal firstly to Westerners and secondly to daughters of the relatively small middle class. For all these activities to be viable, two basics are necessary—time and place.

The workers have little leisure time; and there is no general meeting place. As for the Asians, the primary entertainment is cinema—Hong Kong glossies or Kung Fu dramas—with special 1 a.m. showings for restaurant workers. The clubs themselves provide another place to go in the few hours off, often for gambling. As you'd expect, the latter doesn't form part of the activities offered by the China-oriented clubs. Ideologically they are opposed to both that and the materialist values embedded in the Hong Kong movies. Where culture is concerned it's related to political theory—children learn revolutionary songs and dances of new China when the Chinese language classes finish. A revolutionary male choir based in Bateman Street's Mutual Aid Club, performs on occasions like China's National Day. The same pattern of left- and right-wing clubs is to be found also in Liverpool, Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham, and Glasgow.

With all minorities, it is impossible to divorce events in their original countries from the lives in this country. Polish history informs and provides the whole emotional matrix for the Polish community here. Events of Partition and after in the Indian sub-continent affect social relationships in England. With the Chinese, the gulf between mainland China and Hong Kong/Taiwan is reflected in organisations and structures here: left-wing and right-wing clubs, organisations to publicise the achievements of both sides, like the Free China Centre and the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding, mainland newspapers and bookshops and the Nationalist counterparts.

It is however claimed, within the Chinese community, that the political gulf has become less totally divisive over the past few years. Five years ago Liverpool's Chinese National Day celebrations had more performers than audience, claimed a Liverpool Chinese. 'It was almost embarrassing.' That was not the case this year either in Liverpool or London. The reasons seen for that are international, related to China's own place in the world picture. In the days of her isolation, the polarities of opinion were sharply defined. With increasing and well-publicised visits of western premiers to China, and her entry into the United Nations, ordinary Chinese in this country found themselves able to admit to what might have been only a silent admiration before. Indeed, there is an understandable ambivalence in the minds of people most wedded to the capitalist system, who for racial reasons cannot but be proud of the achievements of China while they would never in the world go there to live. Developments do seem to have created a broader middle-ground, in which one hopes

that greater co-operation can take place. The needs of the community are great—for language classes, information about basic rights and government services, legal help, literacy classes. It is noticeable that during the Home Office's Urban Aid Programme Phase 12 (designed with ethnic minority needs in mind), no Chinese projects were sanctioned. No local government authority that we heard from mentioned either forwarding a Chinese application to the Home Office or detailed any aid given by themselves.

It is surprising that Chinatown's best-known cultural achievement (after its cooking) receives no government help in any form. The Chinese New Year Festival, celebrated each year with increasing vigour, draws, say its organisers, ten thousand observers, both Chinese and other. Nor is London alone. Middlesbrough (who pioneered the Chinese new year observance) celebrated it again in 1976; Manchester Chinese organised a Lion Dance; Liverpool had a Unicorn Dance. Huddersfield Chinese organised a celebration meal at a child-minding centre to which many Chinese children go. In London the current year—the Year of the Dragon—was celebrated on February 1st with great noise and excitement, with a large silk lion, drums and cymbals. The dancers beneath the rather playfully savage lion manipulated it bobbing along Gerrard and Wardour Streets, menacing upper windows until their giggling inhabitants had paid their tithe to the new year. Restaurants were packed and steaming in the cold afternoon. The atmosphere was of a happy, expansive holiday mood.

Even so, there is much in it with which the organisers of the festival—an adhoc committee that drifts together each year—are dissatisfied. The standard of the dancing they say, could be far better. It is after all not like a pantomime horse, but a Kung Fu art that needs training and practice.

They would like to be able to afford more of a show. For this year, the auspicious Year of the Dragon, they would have liked a dragon instead of the usual lion—but that costs £600 in Hong Kong, and local dragon- (or lion-) makers are unknown in this country.

It is clear from talking to the organisers, that the New Year festival struggles into existence each year almost despite itself. The first necessity—money—is an annual problem. The committee worked in 1976 to a basic budget of £4,500. The only certain amount of that was from the Hong Kong Government Office who gave £200. The rest came from institutions like banks and Chinese Chamber of Commerce, both large and small Chinese restaurants, and additional donations from businesses (like an English butcher) who had close links with the restaurant trade.

The second necessity is personnel. Lion dancing needs 30 dancers, including relief dancers, and extra musicians. Trained dancers are hard to find, which is why the Festival Commitee has to organise training. Until 1975 they found it necessary to import a teacher from Hong Kong. In that year

they fortunately found a qualified restaurant-worker in Outer London. In 1976 a Kung Fu master, Master Luk, happened, by lucky chance, to be over in Britain. Once having found the money, tutor and potential dancers, more problems present themselves. Firstly, there is the difficulty of finding a commonly convenient rehearsal time—shifts differ in the restaurant trade; secondly, there's the major difficulty of finding a place in the area in which to rehearse. When one realises that, in addition, dancers come from as far afield as Sheffield, it is extraordinary that any new year festival occurs at all.

The Chinese community have so far not applied for grants for their New Year Festival—indeed, seemed surprised to learn that they might be eligible for any. In addition to specific festival-tied grants, however, what is clearly needed is a place that could operate the year round. Nothing approaching a community centre exists in the Gerrard Street area, though the clubs and restaurants perform some of their functions.

However there seemed to be a general desire for a place—'and not a decrepit rathole,' said a left winger—that could house language classes, an advice centre and a library, as well as providing space for good Kung Fu training and music classes like those given by Raymond Man. Everyone I spoke to disliked the current popularisation of Kung Fu as merely an exotic form of warfare, an idea, they said, that was also being perpetuated by 'false' teachers. Kung Fu is an extension, like yoga, of philosophy involving mental discipline even more than physical. A Centre could institute approved classes by a genuine Master.

What, to an outsider, seems astounding is the Chinese's own diffidence. I would find, I was told, traditional Chinese music very boring. Oh, yes, of course, my informant liked it. In fact I was rivetted by the practice of Mr Man's group (moon-guitar, 2-stringed violin, banjo and dulcimer). I have no doubt that others would find the music equally fascinating.

They played a range of work, some classical but mainly Cantonese folk music ('From now on,' said Man, 'we must play more people music') going back time and again to listen to phrasing and balance of sound on the tape. Performance dates are uncertain for them—maybe there will be some work in a Chinese restaurant as an exotic background noise; a couple of universities had expressed interest. Restaurateurs, said Man dismissively, had at times suggested being his patron, but too often that came down to being summoned to play for free at private parties. His life as a musician is hard. Members of the group come and go—family responsibilities claim many. Chances of performances are few, other than a date some years ago at the Commonwealth Institute. Although his Chinese Music Society has 600 members, it results only in a performance about once a year. He himself is unsure whether his music could be comprehensible to the West.

Meanwhile he moles on in a tiny basement measuring about 17 × 14 feet and

crammed with, at rough count, some 70 Chinese musical instruments, a number of very handsome plants and a cat or two. The table is a drum. On it stand a teapot and four small tea-bowls for the musicians. On the walls hang relics of his greatest achievement—the production of a Chinese opera, with forty participants, six years ago. It is something he would dearly love to repeat, but doesn't think the musical talent here is developed enough. He would have to import musicians, who might then stay here and pass on their skill. Meanwhile he exists by importing Chinese musical instruments from China and selling them, mostly to the States. He also has some pupils—English, Irish, Italian and German. From upstairs, as the practice goes on, comes sawing and banging. The ground floor is being transformed, from a Chinese restaurant, to a Chinese music shop.

Who is responsible for the isolation of the Chinese? Is it their own desire, their own diffidence, or their disadvantage with the English language? One chance element in it is perhaps the fact that the Chinese were never so overwhelmingly a part of the British Empire as was India. The impetus behind the present-day community relations movement was often fed, twenty years or so ago, by redoubtable old Empire hands—who had spent more of their lives in India than in England, who could speak in some measure an Indian language and who had an appreciation of its culture. Such go-betweens have been notably lacking from the old days of Malaya and Singapore, and their virtual absence has made an approach to the Chinese the harder.

For whatever historical reason, it is still striking that throughout the country what little comprehension there is of the Chinese community. Liverpool's English language class, consisting mainly of Chinese—Liverpool's largest non-English speaking minority—is not geared to Cantonese speakers. The Liverpool Chinese community did not participate in the 1973 and 1974 Granby Road Festivals—splendid amalgams of African, Asian and West Indian contributions. Strictly speaking the Chinese are not of the area, being centered half a mile away, but other non-Granby groups came into Liverpool 8 for the festival, and the Chinese absence seems significant.

After writing the above paragraph, I switched on the television for a visiting child. There was innocuous Basil Brush, but by sheer coincidence involved in a Chinese adventure. The child laughed heartily at the funny Chinese voices (all 'r's transposed to 'l's, words given an 'ee' ending as in 'velly nicee'), and shivered as the fiendish yellow perils hurled strange knives through the open window at bold Basil. The thought of Chinese children sitting throughout this country, watching this parody of their own parents and culture, was appalling. If any example was needed of the difference of sensitivity between general attitudes to for instance West Indians and to Chinese, this was it. One cannot, thank heaven, imagine any longer comic black pop-eyed slaves on television. Enough lobbying and protest has gone on by both white and black

groups to stop the worst excesses. With the Chinese, the stereotype however is still alive and unquestioned. Without more knowledge of them or participation by them in society's life at large, it is likely to go on thriving.

Estimates of the number of Chinese in Britain range from a minimum of 50,000. In addition, Jackson and Garvey in their 'Chinese Children' reckoned 2,000 children a year are coming from Hong Kong to join their parents. It is these children who need far more than is currently offered them, in terms of their particular language problems, of their social situation and their future in the jobs market.

They need to see their culture—particularly festivals like New Year—valued and supported by the host community. Visits of groups like the Chinese athletes, Wu Shu, in May 1975 (which was well supported, despite the price, by the Chinese community) play a valuable role. In all communities, the effect of professional visiting groups from the country of origin is great. Ukrainian dance groups here draw their material from Ukrainian visitors' repertoires; dance groups from Poland, like Slask and Mazowsza, have played in the Royal Festival Hall, and others have visited Polish clubs in this country. We could see visits by African and West Indian drama groups like, in the former case, Uganda's Abafumi at the World Theatre Season, being of similar importance. Not only do such tours feed groups dealing here with the same source material; they also give the work a broader exposure to the host community.

Not only we but also the Chinese community have a long way to go toward achieving some form of genuine accommodation. The community, said Mr Cheung of Gerrard Street's Hong Kong Cultural Service, is still in its infancy in England. Before funding and/or structures can be devised for the cultural needs of the Chinese community, they themselves will have to articulate the needs more clearly, so that no sort of cultural colonialism should take place.

The initial need in the central focus of Gerrard Street is clearly a building, particularly for English and Cantonese classes. Should a form of organisation emerge from the Chinese community ready to administer such a project, we believe that the Home Office through Urban Aid, the GLC and the local authority of Westminster should look favourably on it. Were cultural activities—both classes and performers—to evolve from it naturally, we believe they should be supported by ILEA, the Arts Council and Greater London Arts Association in whatever capacity then seems relevant.

CHINESE

The 1971 Census recorded 29,000 from Hong Kong, 27,000 from Singapore and 13,000 from China. Many of these are however not ethnically Chinese. What is clear, though, is that the Chinese are the poorest minority in terms of

existing facilities. Only a handful of cramped social clubs exist that can in no way answer community need. And consideration of their situation by in particular the race relations structure has been markedly less than for other minority communities.

We recommend:

1 that, as a priority, the facilities provided for other minority communities particularly under the Urban Programme, be published among the Chinese by the Race Relations Commission and local community relations councils.

2 that a more protracted report into the social and cultural needs of the Chinese should be commissioned by the Race Relations Commission to complement the work of Jackson and Garvey in 'Chinese Children'.

3 that classes in Chinese language and culture should have instructors' fees paid by local education authority and be helped if necessary to find premises in schools, adult education institutes, youth clubs or community centres.

4 that the possibility of a community centre, particularly in London's Gerrard Street area, be investigated. This should be funded primarily by Urban Aid and the Borough of Westminster, with cultural and educational activities funded by local authority, Inner London Education Authority, Arts Council and Greater London Arts Association.

5 that a range of visiting companies should be encouraged, from Cantonese opera to Peking Wu Shu, (from both Hong Kong and China), by the Arts Council and British Council, so as to give both native-British and Chinese-British a sample of overall Chinese culture.

6 that major festivals like the Gerrard Street New Year Festival should receive full backing from the county authority, Race Relations Commission and regional arts association. On-going assistance towards organisation should be provided by the local authority and regional arts association.

7 that smaller functions like the celebration of China Day should be eligible for a grant, where they present cultural groups, from local authority arts and entertainments departments.

8 that Chinese musicians, music groups, dancers and painters be encouraged to participate by community relations officers, local authority arts officers and regional arts associations in local festivals.

Chapter Four: Cypriots

In the phone book, Number 94 Camden Road, London NW1, is called 'Cypriot Community Centre'. Recalling Polish, Ukrainian and some Indian centres covered in this report, the title conveys an image of size, some splendour and diversity. It suggests space for classes, meetings, a library maybe. In fact, Camden Town's Cypriot Community Centre looks, to the ignorant eye, like one of the area's hundred kebab cafes. A single-fronted building with the ubiquitous lit-up Pepsi-Cola sign, it gives little indication of any function other than commercial.

Nevertheless it is still the nearest thing to a separate (secular) community centre that Britain's Greek-Cypriots have. Here English and Greek tuition and dance classes take place and meetings are based. On the Monday evening that I went, the place however, seemed deserted. Only one customer (and clearly a friend of the proprietor) sat rather gloomily at the neon-lit formica-topped tables. Everything was very silent. The appearance was deceptive, because indeed, down a narrow staircase in the basement, a dance class was in progress.

Camden Town's dance class is one of the now few that is not held under the aegis of the Greek Orthodox Church. There are currently, reckons C.V. Zissimos, Chairman of the Islington Cypriot Community Association, only five dance classes in London where the bulk of the Cypriot community is based. This is a considerably shrunken number. In the 1950s there was extensive cultural activity with, he remembers, about sixty groups (including Turkish-Cypriot ones) in the country at large. Lack of outlets other than in the relatively small Cypriot community and lack of any outside support have led to their shrinkage. Organising classes and searching for bases of possible performance demands time, dedication and energy from the activities' promoters. Without back-up from the bodies who could have been expected to give advice and moral or financial support—such as local authority arts departments, amateur music and dance festivals, community relations councils—'they themselves lost energy'. It is a lesson with overall relevance for ethnic minority arts.

'As a community,' said George Evgeniou, director of London's Cypriot theatre, Theatro Technis, regretfully, 'we suffer because we are not organised.' In fact, organisation does exist, in a very strong form. But it is religious

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rather than secular, springing from the Church, the overriding social structure for Britain's Greek-Cypriots. Like the Polish Catholic Church, it divides the country into a number of parishes—now in the region of thirty-five—and in each area provides the main focus and major source of patronage.

Some groups speak bitterly of what they see as a stranglehold. (There is in addition some strong anti-Church feeling for its alleged past support of the Greek Junta.) The most thriving dance group, Dionysos, much used in its heyday four years back by the Commonwealth Institute, felt the Church contributed to its dissolution. They had existed under the Church's wing and used its premises. When however, the group's orientation moved away from them providing an activity for the children and more toward performing themselves, those premises were withdrawn. Dionysos then found itself in a limbo without a support organisation, without premises and—at the same time—increasing outside personal commitments. Eventually this apparently very talented group died.

Understandably, the Greek Orthodox Church sees its dance groups as being primarily a means to an end. For Bishop Chrysostamos at Saint Andrews Greek School, Kentish Town, the popular twice weekly dance classes run there serve a clear function. They are to help retain the allegiance of the young people to the Church. Obviously in the history of many denominations of the Christian Church, the arts and religion are inextricably intertwined. The extremely beautiful Byzantine frescoes and mosaics are evidence to the effect of the Greek Orthodox Church. But a stable expanding society is different from one under stress. As far as young Cypriots in Britain are concerned, it is inevitable that art for the Church must be secondary to the preservation of religious ties.

The number of Cypriots in Britain is officially estimated at 73,000 under the 1971 Census, 18% of which Mr Zissimos believes are Turkish-Cypriots. (Regrettably, we had no response from any Turkish organisations—including the Office for the Turkish Administration of Cyprus—who were contacted.) Greek-Cypriots themselves set the present figure rather higher—between 120,000 and 150,000.

The bulk came over in the 1950s and the 1960s, at a time of great upheaval in the island's history. Most were peasants from rural areas; set on improving their lot and the future of their children. A large community grew up particularly around London's Camden Town and transformed it with Greek restaurants, cafes, bakeries and grocers shops. Although a large amount of Camden's Cypriots have now moved north—particularly to Haringey and Wood Green—they still patronise the old local institutions. The ribbon running north from Camden Town up to Archway is packed with discreetly-curtained 'Social Clubs', the main leisure base for Greek-Cypriot men. The more expensive and public tavernas in Holloway, round the Nag's Head, who employ groups

of young bouzouki-players to give the clientele an ethnic atmosphere, are in a different bracket, as are the restaurants of North Soho.

Life for most Greek-Cypriots is still traditionally structured, partly because they are a young emigration and from the traditional countryside. It gravitates around the Church, around the social clubs, around family occasions like their vivid weddings (where the truest music, dance and songs are to be found). The girls are protected so that—apart from any other danger—their standing does not go down in the eyes of the community. At the end of the Camden Town dance class, parents began to drift in to collect their daughters. Other girls phoned home to say they were ready to be picked up. 'You've got to be very careful,' said Andreou Pantelakis, the young teacher. 'Cypriot parents don't like people to say that they had seen their daughter alone on a bus.' He said that happily he himself is a respectable teacher with a 'clean name' and moreover understands the isolation of some young Cypriots. He himself left to grow up in London without his parents, had frequented cafes and gambling clubs. However, he then fell in love with Greek dancing, found himself drawn back into the community and rehabilitated. He is not only a very good dancing teacher, but also a journalist and when he married was accorded an accolade of respectability—'the biggest wedding you could find'.

The problems of identity that he implicitly talked about were also touched upon by other Cypriot community figures. The older generation can evolve a relatively satisfying modus vivendi, as close a copy of old patterns as they can make it. At the same time however, said Dr P. Vanezis (the Cyprus High Commission's Education and Cultural Attaché) they are deeply concerned about their children. Feelings are strong that they should not become 'decultured', losing their language and religion as well as culture.

But the force of outside society is strong and Greek-Cypriot young are not kept homogenous as those who are darker skinned, by virtue of that fact alone. Had they happened to be black, the unfriendly attitude of society would have forced them back to find the strengths of their own mother-culture. As it is, he went on, 'I feel that all the efforts of the Church, the organisations and the High Commission itself will not be enough to prevent Cypriot children being swallowed.'

How undesirable is it that children should be 'swallowed' by the English way of life? The important thing is surely that a choice should exist. If the younger generation needs to explore its own background the opportunities should be there for it to do so. Dr Homer Habibis, president of the Greek-Cypriot Brotherhood and the Greek-Cypriot Co-ordinating Committee, feels that the situation is more fraught for the young. Ironically, he says, it is the emotionally very lost older Cypriots who desperately need the existence of old cultural traditions, but who—being '99.9% peasants'—lack the knowledge of

not only how to preserve it but how to organise it in an industrialised urban situation. Alternatively the section of the youth who do not feel they can be utterly English and who have urban skills of organisation do not have the deep-rooted identity of their parents.

The Camden dance class was full of handsome black-haired youngsters with a foot in both worlds: the girls in trendy platform shoes, the boys in impossibly wide stylish trousers. Their language was English, though they clearly followed the resolute Greek of the determined Mr Pantelakis. However, all felt that keeping up the Greek connection was personally important, even though their elders might feel their instinctive knowledge of it must be low.

The standard of the advanced members, as they rehearsed on the night I visited the youth club, seemed irreproachable and their enthusiasm contagious. The dances were precise, stamping, metrically complicated ones. Hands clapping, whoops, fingers clicking, heels slapped high in the air, aggressive and yet cheerful. The catchy violin music (from a tape recorder) could not help making the romantically inclined think of Greek mountains, honey, sheep. In another world, the leader of a Bengali folk group spoke about the refreshing function of folk music in an urban surrounding. It gave back, he said, memories of a simplicity lost. In that rather tatty basement room in Camden—restaurant carpet on the floor and indifferent murals of classic ruins on the walls—it was possible to feel all that, and to be suddenly revived. I found myself wanting to go out onto the grey street and bring in others to share my pleasure.

The problem for this class and for others, such as Mr Zissimos' popular ones in Islington, is space. Zissimos runs cultural and language classes in an after-hours' school. He's grateful for the premises, but increasingly aware of their imperfections. He claims petty harassment from the caretaker and complaints that all is not left totally neat after the dance, language and bouzouki classes. How can it be otherwise, he gestures, after up to 170 high-spirited youngsters have been let loose? The basement in which the Camden Youth Club dances is its own property, but impossibly cramped. A narrow long room, it gives no-one the space to dance expansively, and round dances involve everyone shuffling to avoid tripping over the feet of the person in front.

The Greek-Cypriot Brotherhood has been looking closely for a long time into the feasibility of a Cypriot community centre that would include space for a theatre, meetings, dance, music and language classes, library and recreation hall. It could almost host the very popular balls that Cypriot organisations at present hold annually in hotels. (The Shepherd's Bush group, for instance, had their St Nicholas's Ball in 1974 at the Savoy. Tickets were £10 a head.) They had been given a £100,000 grant and matching loan toward such a centre by President Makarios. However, rising inflation has nipped the idea in the bud.

Such a centre—preferably in North London—would seem to have advantages. No such premises exist for Greek-Cypriots and their organisations (37 are affiliated to the Greek-Cypriot Co-ordinating Committee). Yet there is a clear need for a focus for a concentrated and relatively small community. Moreover, it would have the advantages of opening out Greek-Cypriot cultural activities to a wider audience.

The dance groups constantly work as for performances, but when engagements come they are frequently of a domestic nature, for private community celebrations at Christmas, for the National Day on March 25th or for occasions marking events in Cyprus' recent strife-ridden history. None attract a non-Cypriot or non-Greek speaking attendance. It is not deliberate policy on the part of the groups: Mr Zissimos' dancers have participated with enthusiasm in borough festivals; the Camden Youth Club was particularly pleased at having taken part in an international festival in Southall and will dance almost anywhere for charity, given enough notice. An adequate centre could defeat the accidental parochialism that at present exists, and make it possible for music and dance groups to be seen more widely. It could also be hoped that festivals organisers and other arts-promoters would use it as a source of talent.

Space has also been the constant bête noire of George Evgeniou, the redoubtable director, founder and lynchpin of the Greek-Cypriot Theatro Technis.

Theatro Technis has been going as a concept since 1957. In the nineteen years since then, personnel and bases have changed, though Evgeniou—its driving force—and a hard core of seven suporters have been constant. It started in a garage, with plays only in Greek since that generation of immigrants was, at best, shaky in English. Plays have always dealt with themes that have some connection to Greek-Cypriots here—'Cyps Go Home' at the time of distinct anti-Cypriot feeling, a modern 'Antigone' set in Junta Greece, 'Under the Carob Trees' in rural Cyprus, 'Prometheus Bound' again in contemporary Greece. It was apparently hard going at the beginning, since there was no tradition of theatre in the lives of most of their potential audience. The slapstick touring group Fiorfiris (which one Cypriot described disparagingly as a sort of 'Greek Bruce Forsyth') draws the crowds rather than Evgeniou's more concerned productions. Evgeniou has had to tempt audiences in to what he always wanted to be genuinely community theatre rather than a showcase for middleclass Greek arts. He had multiple problems to solve—material, place, audience. He's never been able to pay actors, though he would dearly like to give them £20 a week and do new plays. Fringe English groups have started with the same difficulties. The well-known East End theatre, the Half Moon has aims not dissimilar to Evgeniou's: they also want to do material relevant to their working class audience and hopefully animate the community. Nor, in their early years, could they afford to pay their actors.

However, they have been able to be bolstered, when necessary, by middle class non-East End audiences drawn by enthusiastic reviews in such papers as the Guardian and Time Out. The attitudes and methods of working of this group, and other community theatre groups, are little different from Evgeniou's. But the Half Moon now gets an annual grant from the Arts Council of £25,000. Evgeniou gets no revenue grant, and stands to lose the theatre that he got only after seventeen years on the road.

It will be argued that the Half Moon has a greater potential audience. However, Evgeniou regards his audience as not the Greek-Cypriots of Camden (where he has always been based), but potentially all London (which the Cyprus High Commission reckons houses 80,000 Greek-Cypriots). As the community in fact moves away from its Camden base he will need to attract a more far-flung audience, move or tour. However touring requires suitable venues and also an administration. Evgeniou himself is over-stretched at the theatre's new base in York Way; strong local organisations that could do work are usually church based. There are signs however that secular organisations might develop in the regions as a result of the 1974 crisis in the island. In October-December 1974 Evgeniou managed to tour to Liverpool, Manchester, Coventry and Margate with a play relating to the political situation in Cyprus. They had uniformly packed houses and played to over 400 people in each venue.

As the second generation has grown up, Evgeniou has turned increasingly to the English medium. One play that I saw in their old railway shed (beautifully converted by community labour) was 'The Vandals are Coming'. It was about high feelings, in the houses around a residential square over the proposed removal of the park railings. That, said the trendies who had bought working-class houses on the cheap, would lead to vandalism and general lowering of tone (and house values). Very good, said other more democratic spirits. The play and production were, as I remember them, a bit of a friendly muddle (though no more so than some subsidized fringe theatres). But what I do remember clearly, over a year after, is the quality of the cast. It was a community play with community actors—some professional, many amateurs. They were of all ages, from a stalwart granny in her seventies to young children. All played with great energy and humour so that you had the feeling that though the play was pleasant to the audience, as an activity it was actually important to the cast. Evgeniou also included other races in his garden-square community, English and Indian as well as Cypriot—not for colour but as people worthy of consideration. Like the play, the audience was mixed. There were probably about forty in all on the night I went, roughly half being Cypriot and half English.

Evgeniou himself would like to be able to tour—to schools and factories as well as more formal venues—since he sees it as a way of stimulating thought

and cohesiveness in more scattered, less organised Cypriot communities. What he has done so far, with no help from the regional arts association (GLAA), or CRC is admirable for its single-mindedness. It is surely time to take him off a shoestring. With the right kind of financial help Theatro Technis could develop into a community touring theatre that presents subjects with a Cypriot interest to both English and Cypriots.

From 1961 to 1970 funds came indirectly to the theatre from ILEA through Theatro Technis' affiliation to the Holloway Institute. Annual amounts rose from £250 to £8,000. The local borough of Camden started aiding the Theatro Technis in 1970, with an annuallly renewed grant of £250 towards the 4-5 plays they try to do a year. Islington Council has also recognised that its own Cypriot community benefits, and has supported Theatro Technis with a one-off grant of £100. The Arts Council has guaranteed them against a £250 loss for three of their productions. Though everything is welcome, none of these obviously go far to maintaining a theatre and its organisations, quite apart from production costs.

When they found the derelict railway shed in York Way, Camden was generous in the share it took of renovation costs. The estimate for work done at cost by the community was £5,500. Camden contributed £3,000 of that, ILEA £1,500. The last £1,000 came from the Greek-Cypriot community. The finished product is delightful. It is only a pity that their lease expires in April 1976, and the Council have plans to demolish the theatre for council flats. The Greek-Cypriot Brotherhood plan for a community centre includes space for Theatro Technis. Alternatively Camden, the GLC, GLAA and Arts Council should find an acceptable building, and between them fund the venture.

CYPRIOTS

Still a young immigration, (the bulk of the 73,000 Cypriots came over in the last 10-20 years), Greek-Cypriots divide their lives between work, the church and social occasions like marriages. The 18% Turkish-Cypriots are less prominent and owe their chief allegiance to the mosque.

Nevertheless, strong feelings exist particularly among Greek-Cypriots that their culture provides a sheet-anchor for themselves and their children. Some popular activity exists in dance and drama that needs support and could contribute more than it at present can do to society at large.

We recommend that:

1 local authority suggests places for performance of folk groups (e.g. youth clubs, community centres, etc) and contributes where necessary to the cost of musical instruments, costumes and travel.

2 local authority, regional arts associations and community relations councils publicise the advantages of affiliation, amongst voluntary groups that do not know of them, to national youth organisations, local authority arts federations, national festivals federations; and that they draw them into local festivals and competitions.

3 self-help music, dance and drama groups with proven support have tutors' fees paid by local education authority.

4 both Greek-language theatre and English-language theatre, dealing with Cypriot themes, be funded by the Arts Council, regional arts association and be given help by DALTA to tour; and that well-established theatrical activity, as Theatro Technis, be not allowed to die, by Arts Council, regional arts associations and local authorities, because of unrelated outside forces.

5 within the next five to seven years, a Greek-Cypriot cultural centre be established with funds from the Home Office Urban Aid Programme, RRC, the Arts Council and local authority.

Chapter Five: East and Central Europeans

The East and Central Europeans in this country have become a by-word for cultural self-sufficiency. One of the few things generally known about them—virtually a cliché—is that Poles and Ukrainians, particularly, are active in preserving their own original cultures. Vague bits of information are in common circulation—the existence of Polish Saturday Schools, for instance, in order to teach children Polish, the existence of sometimes magnificent Ukrainian Centres. In general the attitude towards the communities is of muted approval. It is deemed admirable that they have set about providing their own bases and instituting their own cultural groups without any recourse whatsoever to public money. For this reason alone it is worth examining the East and Central European situation, and questioning accepted attitudes. The principle involved is central to our whole enquiry into ethnic minority arts—whether they should be accorded a minority interest with no call whatsoever on the state, or whether they should be afforded a status similar to community or professional arts within the host community. Because a minority group forms a successful self-help group, should it then—somewhat complacently perhaps—be left to get on with the job?

The facts about the cultural organisation of particularly Poles and Ukrainians are indeed as striking as the myths would suggest. Home Office figures for Poles are 110,000. No separate figures exist for Ukrainians, though the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain puts the community at about 35,000 (a figure which includes children born here).

Despite these relatively small figures the Poles own ninety-six centres in Great Britain (fifty-two of which belong to the Polish Catholic Church). The Ukrainians have forty-six centres from which operate about twenty Ukrainian dance groups and choirs. They also have a youth centre for 800 in Derbyshire and a Scout Camp in Wales. The accent is firmly on music. Their one theatre group, said Ivan Rawluk, Executive Director of the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain, disbanded: the effort and expense was considered too great.

By contrast the Polish community supports a strong drama movement. In London alone there are currently four theatre groups, ranging from the long-standing company based at South Kensington's Polish Hearth to a newly-formed satirical revue group, the Polish Artists Confraternity. Outside

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London, Polish theatre groups exist in Nottingham, Slough and Rochdale. Not that the community ignores other sides of its culture. However active the theatre groups are, it is still folk songs and dance that pull the crowds. There are about forty Polish music and folk groups in Great Britain, a quarter of which are in London. Spotlight, the Inner London Education Authority's guide to their evening courses, lists seven Polish dance classes (their largest ethnic dance section, apart from Scottish and Latin-American). Every two years the various groups meet and perform in different Midlands cities. No function or celebration would be complete without singing and dancing, from local club events to grander events at the Festival Hall or National day celebration on November 11.

Both Ukrainians and Poles can point to mass appeal. Every three or four years the Polish community commemorates the Battle of Monte Cassino in a huge pageant that has filled the Royal Albert Hall. In 1966 they packed the White City Stadium (capacity 40,000) for an event marking one thousand years of Christianity in Poland, and which drew on twenty groups and two thousand dancers. (The anniversary in Poland itself, they said pointedly, was called 'One Thousand Years of Statehood'.) The Polish Theatre Workshop staged a mammoth folklore opera in 1972 called 'Krakowakcy i Gorale' (Cracovians and Highlanders) that was seen during its nine performances by 4,000 people.

The Ukrainian community seems to go for less flamboyant occasions, perhaps because the interest in theatre as an art form is less. Their best choir, Homin—a splendid group from Manchester—performs at least once a month, and in 1974 had a successful tour of thirteen American cities. Their international links, as far as culture exchanges are concerned, appear stronger than the Polish community's. Strong Ukrainian cultural groups are active in Canada, Argentine and Brazil. The famous Dutch Ukrainian choir, it is interesting to note, now consists completely of enthusiastic native Dutchmen —which indicates that the opinion of the culture's inaccessibility and limited appeal might be ill-founded.

Although they cannot be the central focus of this report (they are too small), other European communities must not be forgotten. Both Armenians and Rumanians came together in the occasional cultural event—an Armenian theatre group with a recent production of Feydeau's 'A Flea in Her Ear' and the Rumanians with an evening for their national day in a North London Town Hall. The Baltic States also have folk groups—Estonians in, for instance, Bradford and Latvians in Bradford and Leeds.

Among the most interesting are the 15,000 or so Serbs, who despite their small numbers have cultural groups in Derby, Birmingham, Leicester, London, Northampton, Corby and Bedford. They all meet annually in Leicester to perform their dances, under the aegis of Corby's Czetnyk

Movement (a Royalist, Serbian movement) and have done for the last twenty years or so. The event draws an estimated audience of around 6,500, half non-Serbs.

The Derby Serbian group, Ravna Gora, is the oldest of all the groups. (Ravna Gora, in Yugoslavia, was the base for Mihajlovic's resistance movement in the 1940s.) Their stirring folk dances are similar to the Ukrainians (with whom they share the Cyrillic alphabet) and also use an accordion accompaniment. They are performed by a group of eighteen youngsters. (The organisation is particularly pleased that they now have one English member, the daughter of the coach-driver who transported them for various performances.) Performances take place, on an average, twice a month, especially round the new year, and usually for Serbian religious and national functions. (Their national day—in almost every community a peg for cultural activity—is St George's Day, May 6 in the Eastern Orthodox calendar.)

Keen though they are, however, Derby's Serbs realise that they are not in the same league as Birmingham's, who have had recent both USA/Canadian and German tours. Ravna Gora has no base and meet in the Serbian Orthodox Church. They are afraid that their repertoire might become static, since unlike other groups, they cannot afford to host teachers from Belgrade. Nor can they always get live musicians, but have to rely on taped music sent by Birmingham's Serbian Association.

Derby itself is extraordinary—for a city of 215,000 odd—for the variety of its ethnic cultural activity. An international free Festival set up in September 1975 by the Derby Council for Community Relations featured (besides Irish dancers, a Welsh Choir, and Scottish pipe band from Mickleover) five different ethnic groups: three different Indian dance groups, the Serbs, two Ukrainian dance teams, some Polish dancers and Pakistani singers (however, though organised by the local Pakistani Association, the latter were brought in from Birmingham).

Both the Poles and Ukrainians in Derby are active. There are now only a thousand Poles, the community reckons. Their numbers have shrunk from twice that due to both dispersion and emigration. Nevertheless their institutions go on: over eighty children attend the Saturday school; their dance group performs for both English and Polish occasions about six times a year. Their centre which they bought ten years ago is popular as a social meeting place (they have a licence) with both English and Poles. Their Polish Guide and Scout groups are well-attended. Nevertheless, their shrinking population poses financial problems. The local education authority gives them £80 a year for their Saturday school, but the pinch is felt when it comes to, for instance, costumes for the dance group.

The most striking minority in Derby, however, is undoubtedly the Ukrainian community—even though in the overall picture the central

Ukrainian Association in GB dubs them only 'promising'. It's unexpected, for there are only 300 Ukrainians (at their estimate) in Derby. However, from among them (and with a little English participation) they have formed two dance groups, two orchestras and a male voice choir. As Slawko Synczyszyn leader of the orchestra, Odessa, said, there could not now be a Ukrainian family in Derby that did not have a singer or musician in it. All the performers that I met were young.

One reason for the prolixity is in fact a rather complicated secession. Originally there was a dance group and youth orchestra. These have now split into, in the case of dance, Czuprynka and Hoverlia; the original orchestra, Odessa, is now two groups—one that works mainly with the two dance groups and another smaller group (still called Odessa) that I shall return to later.

The Ukrainian Club in Derby is a large commodious late-Victorian house, onto which a hall has been built for practice and performances. The Wednesday night I visited it was not typical—Real Madrid was playing Derby County and only nine young Czuprynka dancers had turned up. (Whether because of traffic jams or football mania was not clear.) The dance group itself is 15-18 strong (like Hoverlia) and rehearsals are usually swollen by a contingent that comes every week from Leicester.

Despite the low attendance that night, the work they did, watched critically by a few people round the bar and a group of very old men playing cards—was quite stunning. Fast, flamboyant and yet delicate, it involved some elements I would have vaguely identified as 'Russian': crouching leaps with the legs kicked alternatively forward, for instance. The variety seemed respectable, though a leader later said they in fact had six polished dances, while Manchester's more sophisticated dance group Orluk (accounted the country's best) had at least twenty. He and another youth now go to Manchester every Sunday to dance with Orluk and learn new work that they can then pass on to the Derby group.

Both Czuprynka (named after a famous Ukrainian resistance hero) and Hoverlia (the Western Ukraine's highest mountain) are in great demand, in English as well as Ukrainian circles. Czuprynka for instance does a lot of work for charities (for the Red Cross, RSPCA, St John's Ambulance, social services, as well as for school fairs and village fetes). Like the Polish dance group, however, they find incidentals hard to meet. Costumes are expensive—their elaborate embroidered shirts are worked by mothers of the dancers, but the work is time consuming and hence paid. Boots—a staple necessity for Ukrainian folk dance—cost about £25 a pair. Multiply that by eighteen and you have a sizeable commitment for a community group, All the Ukrainian dance groups I contacted had a similar practice of giving expenses-only performances for schools, hospitals and charities. For that reason alone, it

would seem a just gesture for local authorities to recognise their services by even a modest grant towards costumes.

The idea of public subsidy is new to both Ukrainians and Poles (as to other East/Central European and Baltic communities). 'We come to this country practically naked', said Mr Rawluk of the central Ukrainian organisation. 'But going to the assistance board is against our dignity.' 'Poles don't like getting money,' said Mr Brzeski of the Polish Theatre Workshop staunchly, 'they prefer to raise it.'

Poles came to this country after the Warsaw Uprising in 1863, settling around the present Polish Church/Centre in North London's Devonia Road and then Earls Court, dubbed the 'Polish Corridor'. The bulk though came over after the Second World War. Both came here with organisations formed as a result of the war. About a million Ukrainians, reckoned Mr Nazaruk of Czuprynka, spent 1945-7 as refugees in Germany, where they set up an impressive array of organisations: sporting clubs, schools and even a university. The bulk of the British Ukrainians arrived here from Germany in 1947-8, having profited from the experience of that earlier organisation and ready to copy it. They mostly settled in the textile towns like Oldham, Rochdale and Bradford. The north is especially strong in Ukrainians (particularly since, some allege, less intermarriage took place there than in the South), which is why the Manchester choir and dance group can attract such participatory and audience support.

Polish cultural structures in this country have been formed by a similar two-tier movement. During the last war, near on two million Poles were deported to German camps, many of whom—as Displaced Persons—eventually settled here. Others had fought with the allies; more came from Italian camps at Barletta and Rimini. Many among them were artists, particularly actors, and formed themselves into the Union of Polish Stage Artists Abroad. (The precedent was a well-established one since Poland has had an actors' union since 1924.)

Those that settled in England started the Polish Theatre, still run by Leopold Kiranowski. Formed in 1946—it is now thirty years old—it mounts about four productions a year which (including tours) are seen by three thousand people, and runs its own evening classes. At the beginning it was a purely professional group, but with the passage of time has been forced to enlist also amateur actors.

Nevertheless the production I saw at their grand club, the Polish Hearth (flanked by embassies in Kensington's gilded Queens Gate), was undeniably of a professional standard. Called 'Oberlander', and by Richard Kiersnowski, it was about the last day before liberation in a German POW camp for Polish women. Kiersnowski had been a journalist during the war, and had actually visited the Oberlander Camp immediately after liberation. The experience

gave him the meat for what was apparently essentially a documentary, with authentic Polish camp songs of that time, tactfully interspliced by the director, Kiranowski.

Not understanding the language of a play concentrates the mind wonderfully and forms a good litmus test of a production. 'Oberlander' was linguistically incomprehensible, but I was nevertheless gripped. The theatre itself is not the best. It consists of two first-floor rooms knocked into a long narrow shape; the audience section is untiered making visibility difficult. The director and cast triumphed over these limitations however. The sets, extremely well lit, were in well-designed shades of russet, tan and dark brown. In front of the stage stretched a single representative strand of barbed wire, confining the eight women with whom the play dealt.

The careful rhythm of the play and its changes of mood were noticeable. So was the fact that when the focus was off an actress she still remained in character and contributed to a close atmosphere that communicated itself despite the language barrier. It undoubtedly communicated itself to the Polish-speaking audience who regularly burst into applause. (That was nothing, said a member of the Hearth later. I should have been at the first night when actual camp inmates, 'crying right and left', had been present, not to mention the now ill and aged author standing erect in his uniform and medals.)

One passage particularly attracted vast applause. It appeared that the women had decided to stage a theatrical diversion for themselves, and on stage came a couple that looked like Chopin and a folkloric corn-maiden. Their obviously poetic exchange met rounds of cheering. What was this, I asked. It was an excerpt from Wispianski's 'The Wedding' and depicted a poet and his young peasant bride. 'You can cross the whole world and you won't understand what Poland is', he had said in answer to a question from the girl. 'Put your hand here,' he went on, indicating his heart.

'What do you feel?'

'A funny bumping.'

'*That* is Poland!'

A passionate love for the motherland informs the whole Ukrainian and Polish community, both secular and religious sections. National days are as important as religious days, resistance heroes as honoured as saints. The tribulations of their countries will draw them, whether to picket visiting Russian performers or to petition or to send to Polish charities or simply to weep. The story that I had heard of Poles keeping a bowl of Polish earth on their mantelpiece so that it could be buried with them, is apparently not apocryphal. (Though 'certainly not on the mantelpiece', said my informant with a grimace, 'I keep mine in a cupboard'.)

At the same time, that quality raises questions. Is the preservation of

Polish and Ukrainian culture an exercise in nostalgia? Will its force dissipate when the younger generation, with less intense memories, take over? How does the fact that the communities are now in Britain (and presumably subject to new conflicts) affect their musical and dramatic work? Although we would usually argue for subsidy, if subsidy is shown to be needed, clearly it is injurious to preseve a culture artificially if it loses its relevance for its protaganists.

There are no easy answers to that. However, it should be noted that outside changes are affecting the shape of East and Central European cultural affairs. For a start there's a change in geographical location. Initially both Polish and Ukrainian communities were concentrated. A continuing process of dispersion is still spreading them out. The next five to seven years, thinks Mr Rawluk, will see a further thinning out of Ukrainians.

The twenty-year old Polish Theatre Workshop (alternatively called Pro Arte) find that they increasingly have to tour to meet their audiences. Their most recent production of an adaptation of a miracle play (which I saw in Balham's huge White Eagle Polish Club) was visiting Islington, Hammersmith and Ealing as well as Balham. The work of the excellent Ukrainian dance group and choir in Manchester will certainly be affected not only by the greater distance participants will have to travel, but also by the cost of their journeys.

The loss of geographical concentration must affect attitudes of mind as well as the economic viability of the product. Another factor touching both is the advent of a new generation.

Ukrainians and Poles have always felt it a matter of paramount importance to pass on an understanding of their background to their children. In that sense the organisations that they have set up have been in advance of society as a whole. It has only been relatively recently that it has been accepted generally that the emotional health of an individual was bound up with respect for his background, and specifically that school syllabuses should take some account of the culture of non-English pupils. Polish and Ukrainian Saturday schools, Scouts and Guides and Polish children's theatres have been doing that for some twenty years or so. Their children's theatre groups particularly Regina Kowaleska's very good group, Syrena, have been educating the children in Polish culture (as well as the theatre) for—in her case—eighteen years. The result among the young people of Ukrainian and Polish origin to whom I talked was revealing.

All of them had acceptable British personas. They looked like any other teenager, they spoke with the accents of whichever region they lived in and yet their adherence to their parent's culture was, they claimed, unshakable.

Few spoke really fluent Ukrainian or Polish. Dance classes for instance tended to be conducted in a linguistic mish-mash, with English predominating.

But even so, the young people felt that the Ukrainian or Polish constituent was an extremely important part of their lives and one that they would take pains to nourish. (The obvious proviso is that I spoke only to the 'converted'. Those who had discarded their origins would obviously not be in dance classes, clubs or choirs. However, the young people that I did meet claimed that they were typical of their generation.)

Nevertheless there are differences between the generations. It is the younger taste for example that has influenced the Polish Theatre's work. Partly because of them they particularly include plays by modern writers in their repertoire. Slavomir Mrozek's 'Tango' and 'The Police' were popular. So was Solzhenitsyn's 'Candle in the Wind' which the group gave its British premiere at Questors Theatre in 1975. (An English explanation of the Polish text was provided.) Although, apparently, few new dramatists have come forward with English life as their subject, Mrs Olga Lisiewicz of the Polish Daily claims that among the six Polish paperbacks her paper publishes quarterly, a fair amount deal not with 'memories' but with life here. It is to be hoped that trend will spread to the stage.

The effect of the young generation can be seen in music, particularly with the Ukrainian group Odessa which I mentioned earlier.

Odessa was originally a 40-strong youth orchestra in Derby. For reasons that are neither clear nor relevant, they split. The core is still called Odessa, but is made up of five youths ranging from fourteen to the mid-twenties. What they seem to have discovered is a commendable musical balance between preservation and development.

I met them in an extremely cold warehouse that was their base—a big, low dark room filled with equipment, but at least with the advantage of no neighbours. Odessa will tackle anything—pop, rock, folk—and do so at ordinary clubs and discos. But their real concern is with Ukrainian folk music and the Ukrainian community.

They want basically to do three things, said their leader Slawko Synczyszyn (pronounced 'Sinchiyshin'). Firstly they are very conscious that the Ukrainian folk tradition is now being eroded—by official policy they claimed—in the Ukraine. What they want to do is to visit old Ukrainians in this country who still remember the old songs, tape them and transcribe them. It is, said Synczyszyn, an amazingly rich heritage; it would be tragic if, at a time when the world in general was beginning to appreciate its folk origins, it should be lost to mankind.

Secondly, he and the group are experimenting with new combinations of instruments—they usually play electric mandolin, electric accordion, bass and rhythm guitar and percussion—and also with methods of recording overlapping tapes on top of one another. The music they play is vivid, a strange but attractive combination of a rock beat with a folk melody. It intrigues non-

Ukrainians, Synczyszyn said with a grin. Although their main base are Ukrainian clubs, they also play in schools and have done two weeks on the end of the pier at Cleethorpes two years running.

Thirdly, Odessa sees its role as bolstering smaller more isolated Ukrainian communities (of which, if predictions are correct, there will be more in the future), such as the twenty-strong community in Grimsby, At present they play for Ukrainians anywhere they can, from High Wycombe north, usually charging travel costs and a fee only if a club can afford it. Since Ukrainian musicians are few and far between, Odessa is much in demand.

Those are their first-stage objectives. But they see many other needs. There are no tutor books for children to learn Ukrainian instruments, for a start. Instruments like the Zimbalay (a form of Zimbalour) and bandura (nearest equivalent is the lute) can only be got from Canada, and of course the USSR, at an enormous cost. Odessa believes there must be Ukrainians in Britain capable of producing them, and of training youngsters to make them. The scheme is an interesting one, especially since the latter instrument belongs to a whole family of instruments current in England in medieval times, and since disappeared.

Changes are unmistakably coming in the East and Central European arts in Britain. Smaller, more dispersed populations are already necessitating more touring of present work. In order to be viable future work will surely have to appeal to a broader audience—a prospect that seems certainly to be welcomed by the Ukrainians. ('We would like in future to be in smaller towns,' said Mr Rawluk, 'They are more attractive for us. The bigger ones are more blasé.')

At the same time touring costs, increasing daily, and travelling costs to rehearse with a group, make it likely that some outside help will be needed. If so, it is totally justified. On the narrower issue of community appreciation (as evidenced by audience figures), Polish theatre for instance is clearly a vital need for Polish-British. The presence of their own young will be felt by the wise theatre groups, preventing their programmes from concentrating on 'memories'. It would be encouraging if there are more 'bi-lingual' productions like the 'Candle in the Wind'.

More broadly Ukrainian music and dance and Polish dance contribute to Britain's overall cultural life. Neither groups are stinting of their performances particularly for charitable causes. 'I think maybe', said Mr Rawluk modestly, 'that we add some colour to the British community.'

Both communities are now consequently beginning, for the first time, to think of support from outside the communities themselves. 'Up to now,' said Mr Rawluk, 'we try to manage with our own support. But I don't know, with everything rising up, in the future. If Arts Council can encourage, can from time to time organise festivals, I think will be better race relations.' The Poles in addition have a large purpose-built restaurant/theatre/library complex—called 'Posk'—in Hammersmith to complete. It has already cost the

community £1½m which came partly from the sale of property belonging to the Polish University College in London after the charity's liquidation in 1965. The Polish Social and Cultural Association that administers Posk is sure that the centre cannot be self-contained, comprising only activities by Poles for Poles. They want it to be also a showcase, providing examples of Polish culture for all. At the same time they would like other groups and minorities to use the building's excellent facilities. However, about £½ million is still needed to make the theatre operational. Half a million pounds in the present economic climate and from the level of arts-funding sources that exist, is not an easy requirement to meet. What however, should be supported is Posk's intention to form a connecting link between all Polish cultural organisations, so that they can all share storage space and costumes, and so that they do not separately organise programmes that turn out, nearer the event, to conflict with other groups' performances.

If there is not some outside support for East and Central European culture, it is possible that a very splendid tradition might disappear. It is however, important that it is the right kind of support that will help forms to develop, rather than ossify. Posk gives some indication of what is needed.

Both Polish and Ukrainian folk-dance groups, as well as Serbian ones, recognise the importance of seeing new work from their native countries. It prevents their own repertoires becoming stale as well as giving them new ideas on staging. We would like to see visiting artists financially supported to work with groups here for a certain amount of time. (The practice already exists informally and sporadically.) We would also like to see East and Central European folk groups given a subsidy where necessary for costumes and travelling expenses, especially when they are carrying their traditions to English audiences.

What also seems important is that none of these traditions is buried entirely in a succession of International Evenings. Although important doubtless at a certain stage, they make minimal use of groups, and tend to mount them as part of a exotic mosaic.

The e idence of the Estonian folk dance group, Kalev, based in Bradford is highly relevant. Mrs Unnak writes, 'The group was founded in 1952 with approximately twenty members. All of Estonian origin with one aim to preserve our culture, folk costume and music and to introduce this to our hosts, the English.

'At first the group performed mostly for our own people at their gatherings and for old people in and around Bradford. Also school galas, local shows, etc. When we got known in wider circles invitations followed from all parts of Britain and even from abroad to take part in international festivals and competitions.

'However for some years now this interest in foreign groups resident in Britain has waned. It would appear organisations are interested in groups who actually come from their home countries and not in groups residing in England although representing a foreign country.

'Therefore we are nearly back where we started, dancing for our own countrymen and local functions.

'However as our people have settled in many countries and formed organisations we receive invitations to participate in festivals. Least year Kalev danced in West Germany and in 1976 we are going to USA Baltimore.

'As we are a non-professional body, we do not charge for services and therefore funds are always low. Organisations inviting us usually contribute something towards wear and tear of costumes and cost of travelling, but mostly we ourselves pay for expenses.

'The original dancers, Estonian refugees, have now retired from dancing. But our children, born in England, carry on our traditions.'

Kalev's experience of being, for a time, an exotic curiosity rings true. There is indeed that danger, if different traditions are regarded merely as colourful. The temptation is to squeeze them briefly, like a lemon, for the sensation, and then throw them away. This is why any sort of support must develop and open up, and be based on understanding of the artists' own needs.

The East and Central European cultural groups have contributed hugely, though usually in local, generally unrecognised, ways to British cultural life. In effect they have often been subsidising the host community. With harsher economic conditions, as they themselves face hardship, the time has surely come to think about reciprocation.

EAST AND CENTRAL EUROPEANS

The largest communities of Ukrainians (c. 35,000) and Poles (110,000) have been particularly active in preserving their language, religion and culture since they arrived here, largely after the Second World War. Other smaller communities such as Hungarians, Czechs, Armenians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonians, Rumanians and Serbs also support the occasional folk ensemble and drama group.

The work is on the whole very polished and much in demand for charitable functions, as well as within their own communities. Although traditionally proud of being self-contained, particularly the Poles and Ukrainians are now beginning to feel the need for wider support and patronage.

We recommend that

1 where necessary local authorities pay the fees of music, dance, drama and language teachers attached to voluntary self-help groups.

2 grants towards transport costs and costumes and music be made by local authority.

3 theatre groups, particularly children's theatre, be encouraged to use civic facilities (particularly London's new Children's Theatre), that production grants be given by local authority and regional arts associations, and organisational and financial help be given to them to tour by regional arts association and Arts Council touring department.

4 new musical work be funded by the Arts Council; that preservation of vanishing folk music be considered by the Arts Council music department.

Chapter Six: Indians

1 The Grassroots Arts

Manchester in October was bleak and cheerless. A tearing wet rain bit into the streets, emptying them and leaving them shining black as polythene. No-one was about. Rows of derelict houses waited boarded-up for demolition. Neon lights in a pale orange blur over the silent flyovers provided the only colour, the hizz of fast-passing car tyres in the wet the only random noise, except for the blare of distant amplified music that came in haphazard bursts from a fortress-like Tudor pub.

Manchester that night seemed deserted. The streets were abandoned for a cosy television at-home warmth, curtains closed and doors shut tight to.

Unbeknownst to much of stay-at-home Manchester, that night was a particularly auspicious one in the Hindu calendar. The first night of Navratri (literally the 'nine nights', celebrating harvest and the victory of divine good) it was being kept by not only Mancunian Indians, but by communities all over the country, from Glasgow to Leicester, Rochdale to Harrow. In Manchester, the focus was Gandhi Hall, a sedate single-storey building set discreetly back in a desirable residential area, and which once belonged to the Church of the Latter-day Saints. The Mormons sold it in 1967 to the Indian Association, since when it has functioned as temple, sportshall, meeting place and social welfare centre.

Dues-paying members of the Association number 500 which means, says Dr Chatterjee (its President), a total of around 2,500, since the members are family heads. The amount has also been swollen by 300 or so local Ugandan Asian families, who were expelled by General Amin in 1972.

The major part of Gandhi Hall consists of a large hall, being used when I arrived by a number of smart businessmen in crisp white shirts for a game of badminton. To one side is, with its attendant priest, the temple area,—carpeted, highly coloured, the image of the God banked by flowers and incense. On the other side is the office in which we sat drying out and discussing the function of the centre with the older men.

It felt, at times, like being back in traditional patriarchal India. The elders expounded. The young people, brought in to represent examples of their junior membership, sat shyly on the edge of their seats and shot side-long glances at the older men before venturing a sotto voce answer to any question

I asked. (It seemed significant that the only one who admitted to ideas of her own was a girl who had come from East Africa.) From time to time a few women put their heads round the door to ask if maybe the badminton-playing men could wind up since they wanted to start the Navratri celebrations. The men nodded sagely but nothing happened.

The situation had a claustrophobic element. At the same time though, it was soothing, solid and time-honoured. The social structure was intact. The priest was in the temple, the elders were in secular control, the young were respectful, and all was well with the world.

Almost all the Indian associations and community members to whom I spoke aspired to premises of their own. Some, like Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham have managed to acquire them and make them economically viable. (Manchester apparently raises about £4,000 a year from the community, half of which went on the now defunct newspaper 'The Mancunian Indian'. Part of its income also comes from letting Gandhi Hall to an English play group every weekday morning.) Many have a religious base, like the Gandhi Hall Indian Temple or the Sikh gurudwara—an old Anglian church—in Leeds. They hold regular 'puja' services, give the impetus to celebrating the festivals, and provide a priest for marriages and burials as well as advice on a variety of problems. The youth clubs they sometimes also foster have a distinct advantage over their local authority counterparts in that they are seen as more respectable. Parents know more or less exactly with whom their children will be mixing. This, with community fears of corruption by Western permissiveness, is important. The West generally regards the strict parental control of Asian families as repressing freedoms. However, there is another side to it. The child in an Asian family is regarded as both malleable and fallible. It is the parent's responsibility—a responsibility made more valid by his greater experience—to see that the child does not make the wrong choices, which might affect a whole lifetime. A large number of young people do still feel that their parents know best, despite the influence of the West. Or, if they chafe at decisions—will recognise that loving care is at the base of them. Certainly in Gandhi Hall I saw no signs of young rebellion.

An hour had gone by since I arrived, and reluctantly the men gave up their badminton. The equipment was cleared away, carpets put down and the singing began. This was the first of the nine nights on which the harvest and the rout of many demons by the goddess Amba was to be celebrated. Since that was the first time Manchester had kept Navratri—in previous years people had gone to Rochdale or Oldham—there was at first a tentative slightly self-conscious feel to it.

A few women knew the clapping round-dance and led strongly. Others, hitching glittery best saris, followed unsurely. But slowly—helped on by the priest with his harmonium—the rhythm took over; the singing, buoyant,

strident and catching—rose. On the edges sat old women with their cronies, little kohl-eyed grandchildren clutching at the ends of their saris. From Gujarat to Africa, from Africa to England, to Manchester's Gandhi Hall. Outside not the warm October sun of India, but rain. Inside though, firm proof that traditions still hold good, that family, social hierarchy and religion are still regarded.

The folk dances performed on these occasions come from Gujarat, the Western province of India, and are worlds away from the Indian dancing best known to the West. These are communal, festival dances for groups of both men and women, clapping dances, dances with pairs of sticks knocked against ones partners. They are called Raas and Garba. Particularly since the arrival in Britain of East African Asians, the dances have become widely popular. At Leicester's annual Raas and Garba festival, established in 1971, teams come from all over the Midlands. Most of these were originally from Kenya and Uganda. Last year it was a two-day event, which attracted a total audience of over 2,000. And although the standard is variable—ranging from very polished groups like Leicester's own Aryans downwards—suggestions of amalgamation to achieve a higher standard have fallen on deaf ears. Nobody was willing to lose his or her identity.

Understandable though that is, some sort of outside standard is clearly necessary in both the Raas/Garba world and its vivid Punjabi counter-part the Bhangra dance groups. It must be appreciated that many dance groups see their function as essentially an amateur community activity. However, others could gain by having more public outlets than they have. One already exists—the Hindi/Urdu television programme, Nai Zindagi Naya Jeevan, which has consistently given exposure to both local and visiting performers. But its scope is necessarily limited by a mere twenty-five minutes in which to cram news and discussion as well as cultural items. Important though any outlet is, we would still prefer minority cultural achievement not to be seen in ethnic minority programmes alone.

Evidence presented by the BBC to the Ethnic Minority Arts Enquiry (see Appendix C) stressed that its criterion was simply of excellence. 'Rare talent will find its way to the microphone or onto the screen from whichever quarter it comes.' It also, quite rightly, rejected the idea of deliberately including an 'ethnic element', whether in plays or variety programmes. In plays it believes that 'the writer will take explicit account of immigrants in writing stories that concern the problem of an immigrant community. He will also take implicit account of immigrants by including them naturally, wherever in society they are most likely to appear.'

Although there are instances that seem to show that principle does not work in practice, we would still accept the concept of relevance. However, for this very reason, it seems odd that ethnic minority arts make scarcely any

impression on arts programmes, whether they be the 'high arts' of Indian classical music or the excellent community groups like Britain's Indian or Ukrainian dance groups. We have yet to see the inclusion of ethnic groups that are not only extremely popular within the communities from which they come but are (or could be) enjoyed by the community at large.

The BBC's criterion of 'rare talent' (the examples given are Sammy Davis Jnr, Diana Ross and the Supremes, the Harlem Dance Company) does not take into account the publicity machine that they all employ. Sammy Davis is famous. It requires no leap of the imagination to recognise that and to put him on television. Both IBA and the BBC display little initiative however in searching for groups and performers of substance, who are not borne before them by publicity. In the case of the ethnic minority cultural groups it is unlikely that they would be. With the occasional exception they are diffident with regard to the media, too poor to employ publicists and too ready to accept the 'English only' bias of television in particular. In their case the BBC and commercial networks will have to go hunting if they are to give a more representative picture of society than they do. They should not merely be passive recipients, reacting only to the events that have nationwide coverage. They must also initiate. Both support the principle of a multi-racial society, but their programmes at all levels have still to reflect that fact.

The effect of, say, the inclusion of an Indian pop group on 'The Old Grey Whistle Test' or a Polish choir or the West Indian Singing Stewarts on 'Arena' or 'Aquarius', would be twofold. On the one hand, it would demonstrate the contribution that minorities can and do make, on the other it would give minorities an indication that they are regarded as people and artists, and not just as social problems.

The IBA, in its evidence, accepts the idea, stating that 'a more rounded view of immigrant life in the UK and the contribution which immigrants make to British Society can only be achieved if the life of such communities aside from problems can be examined as well'. Were 'immigrant' cultural activities to feature in either arts programmes or documentaries, that 'more rounded view' would be partly achieved.

It would also very usefully help provide a standard for the many disparate and isolated groups working in the field. That affects not only folk activities, but also Indian classical music and dance.

Two different activities started in 1975 that should also help to bring Indian arts out into the open. One was the first Asian Song Contest, early in the year. It was organised by Channan Singh Chan, a community worker at Coventry's Sidney Stringer School and Community College, in collaboration with Birmingham's Asian Star Agencies. (The latter promotes

Asian performances and music groups as well as issuing extremely popular records.)

The Asian young music scene offers an antithesis to the temple-young of Manchester, and is also a remarkably thriving counterpart to the British pop scene. In style it stands between two worlds. Except for the percussion which is the Indian tabla, the instruments used by the prizewinners, Coventry's Kala Kendra, are all Western—violin, accordion, Hawaiian Guitar. The style in general is Eastern-Western (Eastern beat with Western topping). The concerns are mainly romantic. The look of the groups however is very trendy Western—platform soles, sharp matching gear, long hair. The language is Punjabi (for this is a mainly Punjabi phenomenon) with Hindi and English in second and third place.

However, not all the lyrics are about love. The material that comes into Star Agencies, claims Mr Chan, is changing. Originally it was overwhelmingly folk music. In his notes to the Asian Song Contest he writes, 'The Punjabis have a predominantly rural background. "The only culture they know about is agriculture", quipped a humourist. That's true, perhaps. Take him out of his agricultural background, a Punjabi won't be a Punjabi. The village in the Punjab buzzes with music all the time. Singing at the births and deaths, at meeting and parting, during harvesting and spinning, people compose songs . . .

'But, unfortunately, not a tune, not even a note of his open, warm and uninhibited music of the land of the five rivers can be heard here, he is too far removed, he is sad, he is lost.

'Times have changed, he is settled. The longing for music is still alive in his innermost self. It is music that is bridging the gulf between his present self and the sweet memories of his motherland.'

The lyrics now not only look back to the Punjab. Like the music, they live in the West. They can deal with new themes—with machines, with difficulties at work.

The first Asian Song Contest demonstrated what had been suspected for some time (and what had already been discovered by previous student-organised contests), that there are now a considerable number of fervent young Asian pop groups. The twelve finalists were chosen from heats in Southall, Bedford, Leicester, Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham and from a total of 49 groups. The groups' functions are multiple. Firstly, they provide a service to the Asian community: they play at marriages, functions, national days. Secondly, they do charity work—Anari Sangeet Party (formed in 1965) did two years of free Radio for Hospitals work. Leamington's Anjaana spent much time entertaining Ugandan Asians at resettlement camps. Thirdly—a more insubstantial but no less important function—they provide an extremely valuable link between roots and present day. Their style is a synthesis, a

musical demonstration of the fact that life here can be meaningful in traditional terms. Punjabis need not cease to be Punjabis because they live in the West, even though they may no longer be the prototype Punjabis from the land of the five rivers. They can mould the new experience and express it. Where so many immigrants here feel pressured, lost, defensive and inarticulate, this particular assertion of identity should be welcomed and appreciated.

The second newly-constituted event to take place in 1975 was the first Asian Youth Festival in London. Organised by the National Association of Indian Youth it featured groups and young performers from all over the country—pop groups from Birmingham and London, a would-be comic from Blackburn, South Indian classical dance from Dundee, Garba and Raas folk dance from Leicester, mini-Tagore dance drama by Bengali children. The prize winner was an energetic Punjabi group from Birmingham, The Sathies, doing the folk dance, the Bhangra.

Until recently, the Bhangra held pride of place at Indian variety shows. A dashing fiery exuberant dance from India's wheat belt, it has been popularised in this country by strong local Sikh groups. Down in Southall a Bhangra group (particularly their own excellent local ones) can raise an audience to ecstasy. Even outside the community it rates high. A bhangra group from Walsall won a prize at the 1971 International Welsh Eisteddfod. One of the events at Huddersfield's Festival was their local bhangra group. Derby's Anjaana group are porular at universities as well as at the local Sikh temple.

The Bhangra with its innate competitiveness and display of physical prowess has always seemed a very masculine dance. However, it must be noted —with pleasure—that women are slowly infiltrating this male preserve. The Sathies of Birmingham had two girls as part of their group. Sidney Stringer College in Coventry has both a male and female bhangra group.

The greatest response by a very vocal audience at the Asian Youth Festival was to the folk and pop groups. This was undoubtedly largely because all four appearing had had a great deal of previous experience in public shows. Both the Sathies and Leicester Aryans have appeared on the Asian BBC television programme as well as at numerous Asian functions and festivals. The pop groups—Birmingham's Nadaans (The Innocents) and Poorab aur Pachhim (East and West) naturally exist for public performance. All four as a result, had an idea of showmanship; they knew how to use a stage, how to project their material, and the effect of good costumes. Exposure clearly leads to higher standards of performance. And it is likely that less successful performers and groups on that occasion will have learnt a lesson from the better ones.

However, it is fair to say that even the most successful pop and folk dance groups have problems. The Aryans seem assured on stage. But their

rehearsing at that time took place in the backyard of their organiser, Shantu Meher.

They had previously hired Highfields Youth Centre but the monthly cost came to £10—a sizeable amount out of Mrs Meher's monthly wage of £45 as a part-time youth worker. Derby's Anjaana bhangra group have had constant problems over rehearsal space. They paid £1.50 a week for a youth club, but it was vandalised and they had to move. School halls charge £2.50 a week. A room above a pub wasn't the answer, since neighbours saw young people going in and reported the group to the police.

These weekly sums may seem small. (In fact they appear to be rising with local authority economies to an average of £6 for a unit, ie classroom.) One's first reaction is to suggest they be split among members of the groups. However, when one realizes that most of the members are school children—and pocket money is not an Asian convention—the picture changes. £2.50 (or more) a week out of the family budget of the teacher who is usually not enormously well-paid at his or her daytime work is not chickenfeed. Also it should be set against other elements—the fact that the organiser is giving his/her time free, and that in some cases they have put money in to get the group off the ground. Anjaana's Sucha Singh for instance laid down £350 for his group's drums and costumes. Mrs Meher paid £100 herself for her group's costumes and originally also paid the group's musicians. The dancers however now contribute to the latter cost. Since, as we have seen, public performance raises standards of work, it is a necessary investment if a group is to develop and improve.

The fact that so many Raas/Garba and Bhangra groups do exist for young people leads us to wonder why local Youth and Education Services are not more involved in their activities than is at present the case. Few voluntary or local authority youth clubs at present take any interest in Asian cultural activities. The Cultural Activities Organiser of the National Association of Boys Clubs, Chris Rhodes, knew only a handful. Where there is a clear local demand—and by young people whose background precludes many of the other general recreational activities of English youth—we believe that this should be supported by local authorities.

We were also surprised, where older ethnic minority groups are concerned how few of them enjoy any recognition from their local authority. A few Adult Education and Further Education Institutes have responded to local needs. (So far none have taken under their wing the Indian art of Rangoli. Rangolis are complex geometrical patterns made in different colours by Hindu women on the doorsteps of their houses. Traditionally they should be started at least two days before the major festival of Diwali, and are auspicious for the household. Only Leicester, so far as I know, has tried to develop and exhibit

Rangolis. It would, however, seem a very appropriate activity for an Adult Institute anxious to involve Indian housewives.)

The Mary Ward Centre for Greek-Cypriots and the Bethnal Green Adult Institute for Bangladeshis—both in London—are examples. But these are all too few, an impression confirmed by the National Institute of Adult Education. The Inner London Education Authority pays the tutors and provides after-hours school premises for a range of evening classes in a variety of ethnic minority arts. But this example is not followed consistently around the country. Derby and Leicester, for instance, charge groups for using out of hours school premises for Asian dance classes, whereas Manchester specifically waives charges for activities which are of an educational nature. Again, some Birmingham schools have drawn 'ethnic culture' into the syllabus—children at Wattville Secondary, for instance, learn Bhangra dancing; Golden Hillock school teaches Indian dancing. Other schools simply allow out-of-hours classes.

The decision to include for instance the graceful Garba or vigorous Bhangra dancing, in a school syllabus, must depend ultimately on the individual school. Only they can assess both the demand at a school and the means at their disposal for satisfying that demand. However, where thriving post-school dance groups exist we would like to see them drawn into the syllabus. There is no reason why they should be treated differently from, say, Scottish dancing; where a school has a high Asian content they obviously have the added advantage of providing an example of Asian pupils' tradition.

It is probable that not enough teachers are capable of including Indian folk dance in their PE curriculum. We would like to see the DES and local education authorities initiating and funding short in-service courses for interested teachers. We gather that the National Association of Boys' Clubs could respond to a demand from youth club leaders.

Where out-of-school Indian youth dance groups exist, we would like to see them affiliated to youth clubs, having the use of the premises, and their instructor paid by the Youth Services. If a group performs at festivals, whether Indian community or national youth we believe that a request for help with transport and costumes should be considered sympathetically by the particular local authority. Of course some authorities do so this, such as the London Borough of Islington. But it is by no means common practice.

Asian pop groups are in the same category, the only difference being that they could, coming from a more commercial world, earn some income. Obviously any group that has local authority support must produce accounts. If a group becomes self-sufficient their need for support disappears. It will be asked why Asian pop groups should be treated differently from English groups. The answer is that they should not be. It is not unusual to have an 'English' music group or activity in a youth club (always accepting that the

main emphasis of clubs is generally on sport). In a similar way, Indian music (pop or classical) is rarely yet included in youth music festivals. It is clearly time that it should be, so that these events be made representative of all British youth.

On an adult level, activities like Indian music and dance groups should be treated on a par with English amateur activities, who in the most active areas get some help from the Arts and Leisure or Recreation Departments of the local authorities. (Oxford, for instance, gave £600 to local music societies in 1974/5.) Towards this end we would urge all ethnic cultural groups to affiliate, where possible, to local Arts Federations or local Arts Councils. These (where they exist) are not to be confused with the grant-giving and co-ordinating regional arts associations which primarily support professional artistic activity. Local arts federations are often set up and funded by local district councils and co-ordinate the activities of member societies and groups as well as often promoting events or giving members financial assistance. Regional arts associations, on the other hand, disburse money that they derive from the Arts Council of Great Britain (or the Welsh Arts Council in the Principality), as well as local authorities and private sources, and also co-ordinate, publicise, promote and offer advice on every aspect of the arts. Though most of their work seems to have been concentrated on the professional arts, the amateur is seen by them as increasingly important.

Other avenues also exist. The National Federation of Music Societies (NFMS) for instance, has no ethnic group affiliated. There are, however, advantages in affiliation. For instance the NFMS can give guarantees against loss for public performances—the amount given relates to the fees payable to professionals taking part (leading to increased standard of performance); it can also negotiate with government and local authorities on behalf of its 1104 member-societies. Although at present their members are solely in the choral and orchestral world, their brief does not specifically exclude considering activities of a non-English origin. The NABC and National Association of Youth Clubs offer a range of facilities untapped by minorities, to affiliated youth clubs. The Crafts Advisory Committee could help to foster the development of Asian crafts, particularly the rich tradition of embroidery and appliqué work.

Immediately, we would like to see ethnic minorities make far more use—where necessary—of existing facilities: the Arts Council and other national agencies, regional arts associations, arts federations, youth clubs, national federations, adult evening institutes, schools and of course local authorities. That comparatively little use has been made of them so far is frequently due to lack of initiative by these bodies themselves, but also I suspect because minority communities do not know the ropes as well as the host community does, or are more easily deterred. Far more publicity could take place, far

more active attempts made to involve all communities. At present there is a distinct tendency among local authorities to believe that their commitment to their minority communities ends with a grant to the local community relations council.

It is understandable that local authorities might feel at a disadvantage when considering the field of Indian arts and crafts or ethnic arts in general. However there is nothing to stop them co-opting committee members from local communities; it would in fact be most desirable. Nor is there anything to stop communities' arts groups from banding together in their own Arts Federations in order to inform the local authority of their existence, activities and needs. If ethnic arts exist at present as a self-contained sub-culture, the fault must lie in different measures on both sides, and the cures must be sought on both sides.

2 The Classical Arts

So far I have described the position of what might be termed Indian grassroots arts springing from a religious base, youth and adult community folk dance groups, pop music groups. All of them enjoy a community support eclipsed only by the passionate adherence to Asian films.

However, none of these are what is generally thought of as 'Indian Arts'. In fact until just over ten years ago, the bulk of the British public had little idea that any such arts existed at all. The appearance of the major sitar-player, Ravi Shankar, at the 1963 Edinburgh Festival began to change conceptions. When Indian classical music was subsequently taken up by the Beatles and lesser pop luminaries, it became part of a general interest in the sub-continent (joined shortly by transcendental meditation and yoga). Regular concerts of Indian classical dance at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall—promoted both by Indian impressarios, like Ayana Dev Angadi of the now quiescent Asian Music Circle and Birendra Shankar of Sanskritik Arts, and British ones—gave that art a wider exposure to an increasingly appreciative English audience. In 1970 the Asian Music Circle brought over the great Kathakali dance troupe, the Kala Kerala Mandalam, to Sadlers Wells. The group was swiftly reinvited by Peter Daubeny, as part of the World Theatre Season. Responding to this new growth national newspapers began to carry reviews of such events as well as the occasional feature article.

Not surprisingly, classes in Indian classical music and dance have emerged to fill the demand—a demand that in London at least appears to be equally mixed: English and Asian.

Establishing them has been a struggle. The problem has always been to find experienced, good and reliable teachers. Where do they come from? Frequently they have been women who trained in music or dance before marraige: for instance the Bengali sitar player Jayasri Banerjee who taught

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mainly English pupils (including one pop musician) for a time, or the beautiful South Indian dancer Balasundari who taught the dance style Bharat Natyam, or Rina Singha who taught the delicate North Indian dance style, Kathak. However, the subsequent history of all these teachers illustrates their inherent disadvantage. All of them were married to professional men who were posted here for at the most a few years. When they moved on, the classes ceased. For a time advanced pupils may carry on teaching, but the impetus has died and is shortly joined by the demise of the activity.

The history of the Asian Music Circle's classes demonstrates the popularity that Indian dance can enjoy. In 1965, Mr Angadi brought over a married couple—Krishna Rao and Chandrabhaga Devi—who had been traditionally trained in the South Indian Bharat Natyam by one of the great gurus, Minakshisundaram Pillai. In retrospect, the value of their training seems even greater. Indian dance as well as music is now being institutionalised in India, finding its way into the syllabuses of colleges. A teacher who has served his apprenticeship with an old guru, living in his house for many years and slowly learning not only the art but the attitudes that lie behind it, is increasingly rare. (A good description of the guru-pupil relationship can be found in Ravi Shankar's autobiography, 'My Music, My Life'.)

For two years Krishna Rao and Chandrabhaga Deri were paid by the AMC to give twice-weekly dance classes in the consular premises of the Indian High Commission in South Audley Street. In addition they gave copious lecture-demonstrations particularly in teacher-training colleges and universities around the country, and the occasional performance.

If you had been to one of these classes, you would have realised what a stringent discipline Bharat Natyam is. Unlike Western classical ballet, it demands a mastery over virtually every muscle of the human body. There are exercises for that sideways glide of the head, for the eyebrows, the eyes and fingers, as well as for the major limbs. Initially the student concentrates on dances that show physical dexterity and an ability to cope with different time measures (or 'talas')—dances like the introductory Alarippu and more complicated Jatiswaram. When more advanced however, they are expected to tackle Padams and Varnams. These combine pure dance with expression and the dance sign language of the 'mudras'—hand movements that can be read by a practised audience. They are interpretive dance. A skilled dancer can go on interpreting a single line of a lyric in a variety of ways for a considerable time--a test of her (or his) subtlety and creative fertility. The peerless example is Balasaraswati, who appeared briefly in England in the early 60s and whom I later saw at a private recital in Delhi. Balasaraswati comes from the old temple-dance stock of South India. Though she is no longer young and slender, what she can do with the expressive aspect (abhinaya) of Bharat Natyam is unparalleled.

The Asian Music Circle classes produced no Balasaraswatis. However after two years of hard work, they did produce a core of pupils (both English and Indian) who could tackle the full basic Bharat Natyam repertoire, from the initial Alarippu to Varnam and closing Thillana. One of these pupils, a Swiss girl, gave her Arangetram—the traditional debut of a dancer in which she shows her paces to her peers and elders. The group also took part in at least two Indian dance-dramas created by the Krishna Raos, as well as giving many performances at Indian functions and international evenings. What was learnt at the end of those two years—and I speak, as one of that group, from personal experience—was not only a modest competence in Bharat Natyam, but also some knowledge of different talas and ragas of Indian music and expertise with which to understand, appreciate and assess the work of other visiting dancers.

It is this general education that is particularly valuable which is why the existence now of Indian classical dance (and music) classes in the occasional school and college is to be welcomed. Their number, dependent on the availability of teachers, is not great.

Croydon Borough Council, for instance, supports a class in folk dance and Bharat Natyam at Lanfranc Secondary School, taught by Sunita Golwalla. (Since her husband, Minoo Golwalla, is an opera singer, she has the advantage of being permanently based in Britain.) It started as a dinner-hour class. But the headmaster was apparently so struck by the girls' perserverance that the activity became part of the curriculum after the first term. Indian music and dance is part of the curriculum at Coventry's Sidney Stringer School and Community College. Suraj Mia teaches sitar, tabla and harmonium. There is a Bharat Natyam group there as well as Bhangra folkdance groups. Ealing Borough Council supports Asian dancing and arts in some schools who also have their own groups. The Central London Polytechnic in 1975 sponsored an intensive 10-day course by Tara Rajkumar in Kathakali. The Inner London Education Authority funds one evening Bharat Natyam class, taught by an English classical dancer who then spent many years learning Indian dance—Marianne Balchin. (ILEA also funds two Indian folk dance classes.)

On the whole, though, it is hard to find a subsidised classical music or dance class in London and near impossible in the regions. Moreover, like any fashion, both music and dance have thrown up their suspect teachers. (The same has happened more recently with the Chinese martial art, Kung Fu.) Sadly, teachers exist who have learnt a smattering of muic and dance and set themselves up as experts. People in the field have talked for years of the value of a well-run, demanding and disciplined music and dance school that could provide a high standard of tuition. Were such a scheme to take shape it is undoubtedly something to be supported morally and financially by the host community. Indeed, an autonomous unit could be fostered possibly

by the Dance Centre or the London School of Contemporary Dance at the Place.

A school of Indian classical music and dance could have many advantages, not least of providing a recognised standard of tuition. It could also provide a structure for peripatetic dance teachers as well as visiting dancers. For instance the excellent Bharat Natyam dancer Yamini Krishnamurti could give a master-class there when she comes over on her occasional tours. The same applies to visiting musicians. Pupils of teachers whose husbands' temporary tour of duty in Britain has finished would not simply be abandoned, but passed on to other approved teachers—either found locally or brought from India.

At present there are a number of Indian musicians in Britain—like the tabla player Ismail Sheikh and many others—who can barely earn a living, but could gain not only from the support of an institute, but also the stimulus of working with other artists.

Another advantage would be such an institute's ability to train teachers. At present the paucity of Indian classical dance classes in schools and youth clubs is probably an indication of the shortage of teachers. Certainly many more middle class Indian communities I spoke to, would like to see classes for their children, but could not find teachers. The only youth club class—though hopefully there are more—that this Report uncovered was in Parchmore Youth Centre in Thornton Heath, taught by Sunita Golwalla. Catering for 20-25 young people, it was originally funded by Croydon Further Education Service. However, it was dropped by them because the pupils were not adults but youngsters. For a time the Croydon Community Relations Council took the responsibility on, but were unable to continue very long. In its time the dance group was active and enthusiastic, among other things providing the dance interlude needed by a local amateur opera production. It is a pity that other organisations, such as the central Community Relations Commission, under its Youth Programme, did not step in when Croydon had to cease its sponsorship.

A central institute would not be able to fund teachers working in schools and youth clubs (nor should it), but it would be able to train teachers, set standards and act as a focus of interest for Indian music and dance. It could provide an intensive in-service course for school teachers and youth club workers, funded by the DES or ILEA.

It would also break down that sense of isolation from which many Indian musicians and dancers working in England suffer. No-one, said a sitar-player to me, could be a musician and live in England. What he meant was that a musician needs to be in touch with the developing culture in India; he needs to see and hear new work, and generally be in touch with that particular

cultural climate. An institute that serves as a focus for visiting musicians could at least provide a substitute for that experience.

It has furthermore always seemed a waste that visiting artists of high quality are so under-used on their visits to the West. Particularly in composite programmes, like Sanskritik's annual Festival of Indian Arts, one is conscious of waste. Most of the visiting artists could very easily give a whole evening's performance on their own, for what one sees on the stage is only the iceberg tip of their talent. Unfortunately no real facilities exist for the regular sponsorship of small recitals, which are likely to be uneconomic labours of love. An Indian classical arts institute or centre could provide a base for just that sort of activity, as well as the sort of informal space that would allow audiences to sit on the floor for recitals.

The work of three other bodies should be noted, particularly with relevance to the above. One is a London restaurant the Mandeer, the other two are cultural organisations, the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and Centre of Indian Arts. In different ways their work could be considered pilot studies for an institute.

Mandeer has an extraordinary history. Its working owner, an East African Gujarati called Ramesh Patel, has been active in Indian cultural affairs for longer than I can remember. A poet and painter, he originally ran an Indian grocery shop and also a cultural organisation—Nava Kala. The latter organised performances—for a time had a folk dance group that practised in Ramesh and Usha's flat and also sponsored Bjarat Natyam classes. (The students were mainly young Gujarati girls.) With time and extremely hard work, the Patels have prospered. They now own a purpose-built Indian vegetarian restaurant off the Tottenham Court Road. All plain handsome brick, dusky lighting and winking brass artefacts, it is also a potential arts centre. A small lobby serves as gallery space for Indian painters. A second large space, as big as the restaurant itself, and handsomely dubbed the Ravi Shankar Hall, turns in the evening from self-service food to cultural events.

Every Wednesday evening there is a Bharat Natyam and folk dance class (taught under the aegis of Nava Kala, by the tireless Mrs Golwalla). The hall, with its low end-stage, also hosts occasional small recitals. By the end of 1975 they had had three vocal music recitals (one by artists from the visiting Bengali company, Loka Bharati, described at greater length in the Bangladeshi section of the Report). Mandeer is a relatively new development—it opened in June 1974—but its progress should be watched.

The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in New Oxford Street is the oldest centre of the three, though still an infant. Started in 1973, it is affiliated to a whole string of cultural Vidya Bhavans in India. Although the London branch has an active interest in culture, a mainstay of its activities is Hinduism. The centre holds regular dissertations on religious texts—the Bhagavad Gita, Mahabharata and

Ramayana. It also celebrates the festivals, such as Diwali and Dussehra.

It is also a promoter of culture and organises either large public recitals, like Tara Rajkumar's fine Kathakali and Kuchipudi recital at the Commonwealth Institute or smaller ones in the ground floor shop of the Bhavan. On the floors above classes take place—classes in yoga, languages (Hindi, Sanskrit, Gujarati) and in the sitar and tabla. Their music and yoga teachers are all British and so indeed are most of the students.

The Bhavan is hampered by lack of space, and—despite generous grants from local businessmen and a token helping hand from the Indian High Commission—chronically hard up. For its organisation it draws on the energies of many young voluntary sympathisers.

The Centre of Indian Arts has been known by its companion name—Sanskritik. Set up by Birendra Shankar, Sanskritik has promoted annual Indian arts festivals at the South Bank complex since 1970 and also latterly at the Roundhouse. The object has been to bring over the best classical artists that India can offer, in order to give the West a taste of authentic quality. The festival has had a variable history—certainly at the beginning it was economically disastrous; even by the end of 1975 Shankar still had bills to meet for that years' summer festival.

However there's no denying that he has introduced a range of both well-known and lesser known artists to the West, from the Jhaveri Sisters with the Eastern Indian Manipuri dance to the splendid vocalist, Girija Devi.

The Centre of Indian Arts is Sanskritik's long desired but only recently encompassed development. It is housed in the basement of the Indian High Commission's South Audley Street building—where the Asian Music Circle classes used to take place—and was officially launched on the festival of Diwali, November 1975.

Shankar has dual plans for the future. He would like Sanskritik to generate dance company tours from India who would tie up with the work of the centre. At the Centre itself he would like to have dance classes, particularly for many young artists in this country craving for more experience. ('Young people must be given encouragement,' he said passionately. 'Otherwise we'll all be confined in a dead shell.') He would hope to bring a guru from India, though 'these gurus should not be let out of their country too much'. Visiting Sanskritik companies from India would arrive some weeks before their engagements and give a fortnight or so of classes. In addition he would like to organise series of lectures on Indian culture.

All these schemes are in early days yet. However it must be said that all, in varying degrees, have so far, through recitals, managed to open out Indian classical culture to British audiences. The Mandeer and Bhavan classes also give the opportunity to both British and Indians to learn the intricacies of

Indian music and dance. None make a profit out of their cultural activities. None have received any support from British funding bodies.

As far as funding is concerned, both Bhavan and Sanskritik rely essentially on support from India, whether from government or Indian business interests. While Indian government support must be appreciated, it is surely time to ask whether the British arts-funding structure should not take some part of the responsibility.

Admittedly it is, in effect, already subsidising the far reaches of Indian arts by those school and evening classes that are sponsored by education authorities. But it is clearly sense to ensure that the students who learn have an opportunity to see good examples of the work and that a bank of future teachers be created. We therefore recommend that the Arts Council give particular consideration to helping these budding centres for the importation of Indian classical arts, and to enabling the artists to tour.

As far as Indian (and other Asian) students are concerned, it would be a mistake to corral the classical arts too rigorously into the exclusively middle-class camp. Mr Chan of Coventry said that only 'a few posh families' wanted Bharat Natyam classes. Young Asian pop musicians reported boredom with Indian classical music. Nevertheless there is more of an overlap than either admitted. Both Sunita Golwalla and Tara Rajkumar (in her children's classes in Notting Hill) have children whose parents are not middle class. Nor are Ismail Sheikh's tabla pupils in Southall.

Originally in India, though there were famous royal adherents, the practitioners of the arts were far from aristocratic. Nor are the village audiences for Kathakali performances in Kerala particularly well-lettered.

It is undeniable that popular support in Southall, say, is for pop music and folk dance, but that does not mean that no-one from Southall would want to learn the sitar or Bharat Natyam. They are difficult and demanding, but the opportunities to learn them should be there. The fact that middle-class parents do see them as an extra gloss to marriageable daughters should not detract from the very real strength. (It was heartening, one must add, that the Asian Youth Festival did not promote the idea that mass culture is only popular culture. It included classical with folk and pop, as a genuinely representative display of cultural origins. A particularly crisply-executed classical item—a Bharat Natyam dance by two Dundee sisters—was appreciatively received.)

Other Indian cultural projects exist beside music and dance. The fertile Mr Chan, for instance, has initiated an Asian Writers Workshop at the Sidney Stringer Community College in Coventry. This exercise, started in November 1974 draws together Asians of all backgrounds—Pakistani Urdu-speakers, Punjabi and Hindi speakers and one Gujarati. So far, to their regret, they have been able to contact no Bengalis and so cannot make it properly polyglot.

Their youngest recruit is a 16 year-old Pakistani boy; others are, said Mr Chan tactfully, 'quite elderly'.

The group—which includes about a dozen published poets and writers—meets each fortnight to read and discuss their work. They also intend to work on projects like a study of the impact of the mass media. In future they hope to publish samples of their work.

A very small booklet has been printed and bound by Mr Chan himself, 'Yawan Deep', of Punjabi poetry in this country. Chan has a large collection of Asian writers published in this country—the oldest volume was published two hundred years ago—to which this new booklet is the most recent addition.

They also want to hold multilingual mushairas. A mushaira (described at greater length in the Pakistani section of the Report) is an evening of poets reading their own works in public. It is an activity particularly popular in Pakistan and among Indian Muslims. The Asian Writers Workshop would like to bring together poets writing in Gujarati, Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi instead of just Urdu. It is an admirable idea, and one already quietly pioneered by a Lambeth librarian, Mr Ram Mittal (if not also unknown others). In November 1974 he organised an Asian event in Minet Library which included a similar mix of poets.

The Asian Writers Workshop appears to achieve two very desirable ends. Firstly it bridges the gap—often deep—between Asian communities.Secondly it keeps alive both an interest in language and literature and helps them develop. In order to expand (indeed, to carry on) the Workshop desperately need funds. It must be hoped that the local authority, which has quite a good record for involvement, will not turn a deaf ear. However where this and other similar schemes exist, it would be an imaginative step were poetry-funding bodies, such as the Arts Council, regional arts associations and Poetry Secretariat to examine the idea of commissioning, or encouraging, translations of Asian poetry written in this country, for wider circulation.

Two ad hoc Indian theatre groups exist: in 1975 the Birmingham based L and P Enterprises produced a Gujarati play, 'Kona Bapu Diwari?' (Who Cares?), which played in Leicester and London. A dramatic account of family life in India (based on Moliere's 'L'Avare'), it dealt with an incorrigible miser and his rebellious son and daughter. Eventually, helped by the bumblings of the obligatory comic servant of Hindi movies, his dead wife's family jewels were discovered and the miser had a change of heart. The children were allowed to make the marriages of their choice and all ended happily.

The Indian National Theatre (so-called) also produced a Gujarati play, 'Kadam Milake Chalo' (Let's Pull Together—Nehru's old slogan), which played in London, Leicester and Luton. It was set in an extremely wealthy Bombay apartment and again dealt with youthful conflicts: personal tastes versus family responsibility, freedom versus obedience. Again by the end the

young had (discreetly) won their way and chosen their mates which were nevertheless accepted by the family.

Both productions, despite a rather heavily marked style of acting, were smartly done. Both Vasant Badiani of L & P and Amrit Kotak of INT had enlisted the services of young and very personable actors and actresses. It was particularly striking (and heartening) to see confident young women on the stage—a major contribution to the Indian theatre world in Britain that has been made by more urbanised East African Gujaratis. Other theatre venues drawing on communities from the sub-continent itself find it extremely hard to enlist females. Both Ros Lyle's Birmingham theatre group for Hindi-speaking youngstgers and the pioneering ventures of Southall's Indiyouth (now defunct) cannot (or could not) involve young girls, for reasons already explained.

If Kotak has no problems finding actresses, drawing largely on a pool of seasoned amateurs known to him in East Africa, it is more or less the only problem he and his Indian National Theatre do not have. The INT was started in 1974 very much as a one-man venture by Kotak, an accountant in his working life. Its object, he says, is to provide an alternative entertainment to Indian families here who have no choice offered beyond Indian movies. Although he himself is an ardent West End theatregoer, he recognises that he is a minority within his community.

'Kadam Milake Chalo' had a total budget of £1,000 which Kotak himself found. The cast who came from all over London, and in one case from as far as Tunbridge Wells, received only expenses. For the first ten weeks they rehearsed at weekends wherever they could find a hall, and every day for the last fortnight. The major part of their budget went on the hire of halls for performance—Leicester's Haymarket, for instance, cost them £250 for one night. They also played in London's Commonwealth Institute twice and Collegiate Theatre, Brent Town Hall (where the show was 'bought' by a local youth organisation, Yuvak Sangh) and Luton Technical College (under the aegis of the Luton Bharatiya Association). Transport cost them £160, a hired set £60, stage furniture £200. Kotak reckons they must have played to, in all, about twelve hundred people. (In each venue the audience was, on average, 60% capacity.) Final accounts leave him with a loss of £80.

Finance is one problem. Finding audiences is another. Kotak is adamant that any Indian theatre group must tour: the theatre habit is too lightly established to expect audiences to come to a central venue.

He has had some experiences in nurturing the habit. In India—before he went to East Africa—the group with which he was involved had to give free performances initially in order to build an audience. In England similar barriers have to be overcome, including the Indian disinclination to book in advance. It is noticeable, however, that where the INT joined forces with local

organisations, the turn-out was better. In Leicester, for instance, they had no such contact; and even though local radio featured them, audiences were comparatively low.

Like the majority of groups in this report, Kotak had litle idea of the arts-funding bodies that exist. He would like to mount a play a year, but is naturally deterred by the personal cost in terms of both money and energy. He suggested, a bit vaguely, that maybe the local council could contribute toward the production budget. However, since the INT is not a local borough organisation, it would come under no particular authority. Where it does seem to belong is with the Greater London Arts Association. Needless to say, the existence of GLAA was news to Kotak, as has been the existence of other regional arts associations to very many other ethnic minority groups. The conclusion that r.a.a.'s themselves should overall appoint community officers whose job it is to contact groups of all races is inescapable.

The audience response to both Kotak and Badiani's groups, when I saw them, was huge. (Regrettably, Mr Badiani was unable to answer queries about his group or return telephone calls. However, it can be surmised that, dealing with an identical community and working in a comparable style, that their experiences were similar.) Gujarati-speakers at both found fault with the plots, which they thought contorted, but said that the attraction lay in the humour of the dialogue.

Both groups are community theatres. They offer live entertainment in an acceptably filmic traditional mould—in which none of the social proprieties are essentially offended—particularly to East African Asians. It is to be hoped however, that as they develop they will find local writers and sometimes look at the British setting. The Polish Hearth Theatre Company in South Kensington, for instance looks for more than replicas of what was done in Poland. As pointed out in the Central European section of the Report, they try to find challenging plays that will expand the range of their actors and their audience's knowledge of drama in general, Polish drama in particular. Both the Bangladeshi theatre group in East London and the Indian dance, drama and music group in Derby, Jugnu, have concocted their own socio-dramas—playlets in which social conflicts are explored: the clash between tradition and modernity in a village or the issue of drug-addiction (though the latter was bafflingly described by Jugnu as a comedy). Many other situations however, directly thrown up by being in the West, remain to be explored. There is the attitude of young girls here to arranged marriages (which in a few tragic situations has led to suicide); there is the assumption by families in India that anyone in England is wealthy, leading to financial demands that traditionally must be met, however much personal hardship ensues. A brave company could develop a theatre that examines the place of tradition in a new society.

Talented writers, like Dilip Hiro, could valuably turn their attentions to that area.

Vyvyan Ellacott, artistic director and general manager of Redbridge's Kenneth More Theatre at Ilford has found some Indian attitudes a stumbling block in his desire to involve local Indian (and West Indian) communities in the new theatre.

The Kenneth More, which opened on New Year's Eve 1974, has both a 365-seat auditorium and a 50-seat studio. Unusually, in the overall repertory and civic theatre world, Ellacott has made determined attempts to draw all communities into the Kenneth More. One of his ultimate objectives is to present both a Hindi and English version of the same play. Or indeed, he says, why not a production of Shakespeare by an Indian cast in an Indian setting that would give English audiences new insights into a well-worn text?

The operation has been slow to get off the ground. So far there have been two well-attended poetry readings of translated Hindi poetry in the studios. Audiences were about 80% Indian and 20% English. However, the Kenneth More Theatre is shortly to go into production with a play about corruption by a young local Indian boy, using an amateur cast. Later this year, a local group, the Indian Youth Activity Committee, want to do a Hindi play in the main theatre. (Ellacott has in addition encouraged a West Indian musician to develop a play about a black angel from a lyric to an hour-long rock musical. This will also use amateurs.)

He has also drawn local Indian boys into the amateur work sponsored by the theatre, in order to give them valuable experience of stagecraft. However, he says the accepted disciplines of rehearsal frequently collide with Indian family commitments. Reliability has proved not at all as high as he would wish: rehearsals have been missed or attended late and at times actors have dropped out of productions at the last minute. 'The difficulty is that the local Indian community here have no tradition of theatre', he says, echoing Amrit Kotak. Nor, he regrets, has the local community relations council offered the degree of help and contacts that he had expected. However, he is persevering and his work deserves notice.

Few repertory and civic theatres have paid attention to the existence of ethnic minorities in their catchment area, either by staging a play that would have direct relevance to minorities or by presenting the minorities' work to English audiences. The black theatre group, Temba, has done seasons at theatres like Lancaster's Nuffield, Cambridge Arts Theatre and Sheffield Crucible; occasional productions have been mounted by theatres like the Meadow Players 'Passage to India' at Oxford Playhouse. Leicester's Phoenix Theatre regularly let to their Gujarati theatre group, Literary Arts and Lights (now dormant) as well as to Indian tours like the INT's. But otherwise the field is barren.

Although we would not expect an inundation of ethnic arts in subsidised theatres, more imagination is needed. Many repertory theatres, for instance, have studios attached to them which could be used for local amateur work. Productions of Indian language touring plays could have Sunday night performance in the main theatre.

There is much that needs to be done in the area of Indian arts. Existing facilities need to be opened out to include them, training schemes need to be supported, struggling groups need to be helped. Quite apart from hard cash, a prerequisite is an awareness by the host society of the range of existing work. There are in Britain a considerable number of Indian dance groups, music groups, musicians, poets, painters and theatre groups. The number has never been classified and replies from community relations councils and local authorities have not been overall as informed as we would have hoped. However, we would initially estimate groups themselves at well over a hundred (remembering that 49 music groups entered the Asian Song Contest). Individuals are impossible to quantify.

Most of them, were the imagination, perseverance and goodwill there in British institutions, have a great deal to contribute more widely to society.

Lacking it, in other than sporadic and unconnected examples, their work runs the danger of lapsing into parochialism. Both they and the host-society will be the losers.

3 Housing the Arts

The matter of premises has proved central to this whole study of ethnic minority arts.

Hardly a group, hardly a society, has not wanted a place of their own: somewhere that would serve as much as a club house or meeting centre as a base for cultural activities. At its most developed, the idea includes, for Indians, classes for children in language, history, culture, activities to tempt the women out of their confining homes, dance and music groups for adults, a social-advice centre for all. Some would include in that a base for religious activities.

The urge is an understandable one, and moreover given official blessing in the Urban Aid grants announced in early 1975. This particular phase included grants to Indian, Pakistani and Caribbean centres. In each case, the local authority committed itself to a grant that stood in relation of 1:3 to the Home Office subsidy.

The criticism usually made of this practice is that setting up units specifically for ethnic minorities is racist, that there are no such things as counter English community centres and nor would one want there to be.

Those already troubled by differences, see the institution of different ethnic centres as a further indication of society's divisions. They would say that

official encouragement should be given to not 'separatist' but to multi-racial units.

There is another argument against centres; heard at times in the more specialist field of arts funders. This opinion believes that specially created centres are themselves potential white elephants; that the cost of their creation and upkeep are so great that they are forced in effect to become arts businesses. The expensiveness of the building—almost institutions themselves—will stultify more informed, less shaped, more experimental and minority-taste activity. Eventually the centre will have taken on a bureaucratic life of its own and will find it impossible to respond to the changing needs of new situations. But because it has been so costly to build, it will have to be artificially maintained. Moreover, this view adds, there are enough structures already for 'ethnic needs'. Both views are concerned, and deserve consideration.

On the racist charge, one might ask whether Manchester's Gandhi Hall has in fact increased its members' sense of their own 'differentness', or Gravesend's Sikh temple or London's West Indian Keskidee Centre, or has simply expressed an existing fact. The idea of the equality of man is a fine one, but it should not be confused with the similarity of man. Britain's ethnic groups come from a multiplicity of cultures. Behind them lie a variety of customs, religious beliefs, artistic forms. Their expressions as individuals could not spring from anything but that background. Holland's policy with its new immigrants was to give them an intensive course in the Dutch way of life; then to give them Western clothes and disperse them severally as much as the small country allowed. In our own country, those Ugandan Asians who went through the resettlement camps were afterwards settled as much as possible in Asian-low areas. Both policies could be said to have failed. Dutch immigrants reacted negatively to being stripped of their backgrounds. Ugandan Asians who'd been spread as far afield as small Scottish towns were discovered by a recent study to have subsequently gravitated towards centres of heavy Asian settlement. Leicester's own advertisement in a Kampala newspaper advising emigrants not to go to Leicester failed dismally.

Among the British themselves, the existence of Welsh clubs, Irish and Scotish clubs has caused little consternation. The tradition for instance of Welsh choirs has been considered one well worth preserving. And Camden Town's Irish Centre on a Monday night packed with pint-sized junior Irish dancers, points to the continued attraction of that tradition.

Why should Indian centres (or West Indian or other ethnic centres) be regarded any differently? It is indeed possible that they would not—certainly initially—be very accessible to the English, but there are any number of English institutions that though theoretically open to all in practical terms attract almost only English, and those of the middle and upper classes. The National Theatre or Royal Shakespeare Company have little to offer, for

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instance, Punjabi villagers whose command of English is slight or orthodox Pakistani Muslims whose distrust of the stage is deep-rooted.

Nevertheless, Indians in this country are a community (however diverse and occasionally riven). In areas they have a cultural homogeneity as great as the rural English community living around the village hall. Women's Institutes may not be for the bulk of English women; nevertheless they do satisfy the needs of a certain section of English society. The Indian community has similar separate needs that are as valid. In social terms, they even be greater.

The function of a good Indian centre is to provide a base where its members can, in a traditional setting, discuss and come to terms with society around them. The need for that is enormous. The Westernised Indian—doctor, lawyer, accountant—can draw benefits from English cultural institutions. The bulk of Indian immigrants are however still rooted in Gujarat, the Punjab, or the villages of South India. For them, their own religions and social backgrounds constitute a sheet-anchor. Remove it and you create a deprived people. Provide the atmosphere for its continuance and you create a strong base for future development.

At present, there are few places that serve as genuine Indian community centres; those that exist are frequently dominated by a particular interest—generational, political or professional. The situation is seen at its most dismal at the time of the great Hindu religious festivals. Southall's Indian community, searching in 1974 for large local authority premises in which to celebrate Diwali in 1976, failed to find anywhere. Harrow's East African Asians settled for a hall from which they had to turn away 600. In addition there are the problems of groups and individuals all the year round—young musicians who can find nowhere to practise or store their instruments, parents who want their children to learn dance or music who cannot make a weekly journey to another town or distant suburb, dance groups who have nowhere to rehearse, teachers who have nowhere to teach. Both demand and supply exist. What is needed is a place.

This Report does believe that far more use should be made of existing institutions—of youth clubs, schools and community centres and so on. But even so, those could not totally accommodate the present demand. Derby's Peartree Community Centre, for instance is the base for several ethnic groups. But even so, it can only house one of the two local Bhangra dance groups. The second suffers from lack of continuity as they move from school to pub to youth club.

We welcome the funding of Indian centres under Urban Aid, but believe that there is a demand for still more. We feel it important that any centre funded publicly should democratically serve the needs of the whole community,

and we would like to see all interests and ages represented in the management committee.

These venues would necessarily be somewhat private ones for the Indian community, the degree to which depending on the character of the area. Some associations as in Coventry make an effort to invite English guests in, particularly for special occasions. The producer of the Asian TV Programme, Saleem Shahid, advises all groups to do so as a matter of principle. Whichever ones do so depends entirely on the security of the group and the extent to which they feel settled in the area in which they live.

The relative privateness of Indian community centres is, from the English point of view, a disadvantage. Another is the parochialism that a chain of small centres could engender.

For those reasons (among others), we suggest a second tier, namely a number of regional Asian cultural centres. These we do not see as an immediate step, but one that we hope could be taken within the next five to seven years.

The difference between local community centres and a regional centre are differences of function and standing. Local centres serve more as clubs: places where people from the area can meet, where classes can be held and rehearsals take place. The regional centre is the next step to going public.

It would mount the best work that emerges from the local centres, thus providing the experience of a more professional platform. It would be a place that visiting artists could tour, particularly artists in a form that is at present unpopular with the West. Ravi Shankar for instance could (now) fill a large civic hall, but a proponent of Indian classical vocal music could not. It could mount exhibitions of Indian crafts and the work of painters, designers and photographers. It would also function as a servicing unit, loaning video and film equipment and musical instruments to local groups. It would be responsible for contacts with other regional centres so that work seen in one could travel round.

The advantage of such a regional centre is that it would provide a meeting ground for non-Asians to see and hear traditional and newly developing arts. Secondly it would provide local clubs with a horizon and a stimulus. We use the word 'Asian' advisedly. Although at present there are strong preferences among various Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups for remaining separate and dictating their own affairs, we believe that this will not always be the case. Social mixing already takes place, on occasions like films. Visiting Punjabi artists are as popular with Pakistani Punjabis as with Indian Punjabis. Tours, like that of Bengali folk group Loka Bharati (described in the Bangladeshi Section of this Report) enjoyed an enthusiastic response amongst the Asian community from whichever country they might originally have come. Moreover it has been cheering, while gathering material for this report,

to find some young West Indians expressing a sympathy with young Asians and vice versa.

It is at the level of regional Asian centres that the criticism of some arts administrators and funders—that large arts structures become white elephants —becomes relevant. At a local level we expect units to be small domestic and responsive to local demand. However regional Asian Centres must be sophisticated and well-endowed, worthy showcases for the arts they represent.

There is much that is valid in the criticism of centres. No one could quarrel with the basic tenet that people make arts rather than buildings, and the fear that institutionalism may paralyse. However it is also true that without outlets or a platform, local-level arts may never develop their full potential. Cross-fertilization is necessary, and that is only achieved by exposure. Exposure can be achieved through events like the Asian Song Contest and Asian Youth Festival. But it essentially requires more continuity, more constant practice. That requires a building.

INDIANS

Indian cultural activity, springing from a community of 321,000 of Indian origin, ranges from religious-based dance to musically-polygot pop groups, from poetry evenings to communal folk dance, and is large and intricately organised. The very community base of the arts can act as a disadvantage, producing a myriad of small organisations that find it hard to survive.

There are three main areas of need: premises; a structure to encourage the development of culture; and dissemination of knowledge of Indian cultural activities and absorption into existing structures.

We recommend consequently that:

1 local community centres, that will provide educational, cultural and social facilities, be supported by the Urban Aid Programme and local authorities.

Where a community spreads out over borough or local district boundaries, authorities should liaise and combine over Urban Aid applications. And, if necessary, local authorities should accept 25% of the cost from the community itself.

2 costs of tuition for cultural activities be covered by appropriate local authority departments—eg Education, Youth, Arts and Leisure.

3 the Bullock Report, 'Language for Life', be regarded, in its stress on the value of maintaining a language other than English; but where this

lays the emphasis on tuition in schools we would extend it to support by education authorities for language tuition in self-help and community projects.

4 local authority arts departments (or their equivalent) and regional arts associations take the initiative in contacting ethnic cultural groups, and encourage them to participate in general music and dance festivals and competitions of the host-community.

5 active dance and music groups from community self-help centres as well as from local authority and voluntary youth clubs be given grants by local authority toward transport, music and costumes, for performances.

6 youth clubs, adult education institutes and community centres make more contact with ethnic cultural groups and, if necessary, give room to any existing struggling cultural classes and groups, as well as initiate activity. That the Crafts Advisory Committee involves itself in schemes to preserve and develop traditional arts like embroidery, puppets, papier mâché, folk painting.

7 national festivals like the Asian Youth Festival and Asian Song Contest be supported by the Community Arts Committee of the Arts Council and regional arts associations.

8 an in-service seminar be arranged for community relations officers by the RRC and Arts Council on arts funding and structure; and that community relations officers both present the possibilities of host society organisations such as the National Youth Bureau, National Association of Boys Clubs, National Association of Youth Clubs, National Federation of Music Societies, Youth and Music, as well as facilities offered by local authority and regional arts associations to ethnic minority cultural groups.

9 that all regional arts associations appoint Community Arts Officers whose brief shall be specifically to cover ethnic minority communities (in areas where they exist) as well as the total community.

10 that the media make more use of existing arts than they do, in general arts programmes and documentaries as well as specifically Asian programmes.

11 that visiting artistic groups be supported by the Arts Council, and helped to tour via the regional arts association, to informal venues such as community centres, arts centres and regional Asian centres suggested in recommendation 16 below.

12 local arts galleries and libraries mount not only exhibitions of Indian artefacts but also of Indian painters and sculptors and craftsmen in this country.

13 translations are commissioned and encouraged of Indian language writers in this country by the Poetry Secretariat and the Arts Council and the activities of writers' workshops be supported by them and local authority.

14 that civic theatres provide facilities for dance and drama groups on a par with those they currently offer to other amateur groups.

15 that schools draw existing extra curricular ethnic cultural activities into the curriculum and consider initiating activities.

16 that, in the second stage of 5-7 years, regional Asian centres be set up and funded by Home Office, RRC, metropolitan county authorities, Arts Council and regional arts association to

a) act as a showcase for Asian arts for all the community.
b) provide a standard for the many amateur groups in the region.
c) provide teachers for classes both in self-help and community projects and in schools.
d) serve as a focus for visiting artists in master classes and open recitals.
e) host tours of Asian artists in the British Isles.

17 that, in the second stage of 5-7 years hence, both a national Asian folk centre be established by the Arts Council, RRC, Home Office and also an Asian classical music and dance centre, with similar objectives as the centre recommended above.

Chapter Seven: Pakistanis

Dreamlands Cinema, at the edge of Birmingham's Balsall Heath, is a large rather flyblown building. Originally one of a big chain, it's now been bought by the Pakistani community and serves as a base for a different brand of cinematic fantasy—not Robert Redford but Mohammed Ali and Firdaus, not Raquel Welch but Zaiba.

Films are the great cultural stand-by of the Asian community at large—double bills of romance, farce and skulduggery, all shot through with shimmering music: in the Commercial Road, in Southall, in the Natraj, Leicester's new ritzy purpose built double-cinema complex. Asian mass-appeal films are big business and still expanding in this country. There are, at a conservative estimate, around 40 full-time Asian cinemas; the number triples if one includes Western cinemas that have regular Asian film sessions, such as on Sunday mornings. With an output, even in harsh economic times, of about 400 a year from India alone, there's no problem of supply. Nor is there of demand. For the Asian working-class it's the major family leisure activity. And although the middle-classes claim some scorn for the form's uninhibited lack of sophistication—the tortuous plots frequently involving mistaken identity and/or lack of knowledge of one's true parents—they still creep in nostalgically to watch the latest blood, love and banana skins saga from the subcontinent.

Whatever your criticism, it can't be said that you don't get your money's worth. All human life is there in a Hindu/Urdu film—star-crossed lovers, moustache-twirling villains, vile luxury, virtuous poverty, dastardly attempts on female chastity (invariably foiled), good-hearted comics, thrilling chases.

And the stars—the men with a curious boyish charm, looking rather like plumpish grown-up Asian Little Lord Fauntleroys: there's none of the mean anti-social loner that Western films go for. Indian stars are all good, dutiful sons, courteous if slightly bumbling lovers. Their frolicsome doe-eyed female counterparts are—despite appearances—similarly wed to innocence.

If searching for the culture and entertainment of the approximately 80,000 Pakistanis now in Britain (the 1971 figure of 140,000 included what are now Bangladeshis), films must come at the top of the list.

However, Asian cinemas have two other functions, as popular though by no means as regular. One is as an occasional base for music and variety pro-

grammes sponsored by Asian impressarios (I myself was once part of a dance group that raised great ire one Sunday night in Southall, by doing not folk, but classical dance. The only occasion in which I have been stoned—or more accurately, pebbled—on stage). On this August Saturday, however, the five hundred odd people who turned up were not there for a film or variety, but for a Mushaira.

Mushairas (and Quwalis) are a well-loved, well-established function in Pakistan as well as among the Muslim community in India. They are poetry evenings: large or small, glittering or local. Mushairas are poets in person reciting their works; quwalis (instituted in the 16th century by the Emperor Akbar) are more religious-based and have groups reading poetry in general. The wonder is that Pakistan throws up so many part-time poets—businessmen, students, housewives, police officers—working in forms that range from the traditional 'ghazal' to Hamds (in praise of God), Norats (in praise of the Prophet), to sturdy and immediate bits of social/political satire.

The Birmingham Mushaira would be extraordinary for anyone with a Western idea of poetry readings, used to the (possibly unfair) stereotype of a small number of poets reading small works to a respectful group in a Hampstead drawing-room. This occasion was one of mass-appeal—overwhelmingly male, but at the same time with an obvious range of age and incomes. The second impressive fact was both the enthusiasm and level of participation. No Westerner could have been at a poetry-reading where the verses read were regularly punctuated by cries of admiration—'Wa, wa!', 'Y' Allah!'—'Bohut achcha'—or bursts of spontaneous applause (or indeed, as with one poor poet, shouts of ribaldry at the repetitiveness of work that came over as banal).

Seventeen poets (two of them, women)—mainly local, but including four distinguished poets from Pakistan—were seated in a cross-legged line at the back of the crudely-lit stage with cans of Pepsi Cola. Each read a maximum of three poems, sometimes less. The proceedings were smartly conducted, rather like a sports day or relay race, as each poet in turn walked briskly up to the microphone, read his bits (or sang them), and then returned to the line and a quick swig of Pepsi Cola. Work ranged from religious and moral poetry, from lyrical 'ghazals' to political verse. Sheikh Mujib-ur Rehman had the day before been killed in Bangladesh. A fair number of poets—with the patent approval of the audience—drew a moral from his fate.

Mushairas, of differing scale, are held about four times a year in Birmingham, and in other overwhelmingly Pakistani settlements—Bradford, London, Manchester, Glasgow and Leeds. On the whole the initiative of local Pakistani students' societies is important (as in Birmingham where the students joined forces with local businessmen and the organisation, Tameer-e-Pakistan Tanzeem). A similar alliance produces very large celebrations for the

festival of Eid in Southampton and Glasgow. But other organisations exist. Another Mushaira (again well attended, though by a more middle-class audience) took place in a South London School and was organised by Mr Diwani, who in his non-poetic hours runs a travel agency.

In Coventry, Mr C.S. Chan, who works with the Sidney Stringer Community College, hopes to organise multi-lingual mushairas evenings which will be split into the different poetic forms which will then be expressed by different poets in Urdu, Gujarati, Hindi and Punjabi. The four languages have a similar language base and therefore each poet's verse could be broadly comprehensible to the others. Whether the religious and nationalist barrier can be leapt in this way is open to question—though Mr Chan himself (a man of vast energies and spirit) feels poets are the most tolerant and forward looking of creatures. It's worth noting however, that the Urdu newspaper Nawai Waqt (New Times) apparently condemned the Birmingham mushaira in advance for being open to Indian/Hindu influence.

The economics of mushairas are shaky affairs, depending entirely on the loyalty of the local community. The Birmingham mushaira for instance cost around £1,500, mainly spent on the return fares—in two cases from Pakistan, in one, from Paris—of the celebrated poets Ahmed Faraz, Jamaluddin Ali and Qatil Shafai. Income from the box office was around £600. A piece of luck for the organisers was that Hafiz Jullunduri, a household name in Pakistan, was coming to England anyhow on a family visit. The cost of the function was borne by the business community, who are becoming increasingly anxious about the cultural poverty of their own children. A good mushaira provides the opportunity to show the younger generation—part of the 40% British-born—the richness of Pakistani traditions. The presence of acknowledged masters from Pakistan is considered necessary for large-scale mushairas: they both ensure big audiences and provide quality for less practised poets to emulate.

How many of the second generation are still adept in Urdu is a matter for debate. A theatre group to be formed this year by professional Urdu-speaking actors has been looking with little success for young people to participate. Mr Syed Safiruddin of Liverpool's Pakistan Association believes only 30% of the younger generation there speak adequate Urdu. The Urdu Service of Bush House, BBC's overseas radio station, claims to have been startled by the number of youngsters they've invited on the programme, who turned out to be halting in their mother tongue.

Some schools offer the opportunity to take Urdu for O level but it is by no means a comprehensive attitude. The Bullock Report, 'Language for Life' pointed out the advantages of children maintaining their mother tongue, and recommended that provisions be made for it within the school curriculum. 'Their bilingualism is of great importance to their children and their

familes, and also to society as a whole. In a linguistically conscious nation in the modern world we should see it as an asset, as something to be nurtured, and one of the agencies which should nurture it is the school. Certainly the school should adopt a positive attitude to its pupils' bilingualism and wherever possible should help maintain and deepen their knowledge of their mother tongues. Confidence and ability in (these) languages will help the children to the same qualities in their second language. English . . . (Bilingualism) has an important contribution to make to a sensitivity and openness to language in all its forms.'

We wholeheartedly support these recommendations. However state schools are not the only source of language-teaching; within the Pakistan community at least forty-five religious, social and welfare organisations exist, whose wish is frequently to implement language-teaching.

The basis of these is usually religious, entailing Arabic and Koranic studies. Liverpool's classes are typical of the general pattern. In June 1973 the Pakistani Association employed a Koran teacher for the children of the thousand Liverpool Pakistanis. Classes took place in their first-floor premises over a shop in Granby Road. The function of the Pakistan Association is at the moment essentially educative and advisory. The community, like a high percentage of the Pakistani population at large, comes from rural areas. Hence the immediate need is to help villagers settle in an urban environment. The perpetuation of cultural activity takes a distant second place to that primary aim, but is likely to become more important in the future as economic security is achieved.

Although there is religious-endorsed suspicion of 'culture' amongst extremely traditional Muslims—both villagers and midde-class—there is at the same time a strong feeling that their children are under attack from more sensational aspects of Western society. A very large amount of Pakistanis, of all social backgrounds, spoken to around the country voiced disquiet at the permissive modes of behaviour surrounding their children—the apparently lax sexual behaviour, the instability of marriage, the lack of respect for parents and elders—and regularly demonstrated on television in particular. The Koranic school is one frequent way of providing a counterbalance to that. It provides the backbone of religion and the continuity of traditions that are seen to be particularly needed in this society. The campaign for single-sex schools for Muslim girls is part of the same picture, as well as embodying obedience to Islam.

It is undoubtedly true to say that religion is by far the greatest cultural factor in the lives of the Pakistan community. 'These are people', said Dr S.M. Zaman, Pakistan Embassy's Education Counsellor, 'who do not take their religion lightly', as evidenced by 167 established and projected mosques in the British Isles. However, a strictly orthodox attitude must preclude the

development of whole accepted areas of artistic activity. The petition circulated by the Muslim organisation, the Crescent Cultural Committee, against the World of Islam Festival demonstrated the pitfalls of thinking in non-Islam terms of Muslim culture in general. Handed out at mosques, halal butchers, grocers and sweetshops, it called upon Muslims to protest against the religiously obnoxious elements which they claim the multi-facetted Festival would contain: music, dance and film. It is also noticeable how much at present women are separated off into separate organisations. Some of them are very active (like some branches of APWA—the All Pakistan Women's Association) in social gatherings, cookery demonstrations and raising money for Pakistani concerns via handicrafts sales and charity drives. Children—notably sons—go to Koran schools. Sometimes they are allowed to attend approved clubs—such as the club in Birmingham's Claremont Youth Centre, run by an Islamic organisation—so long as the activities (mainly sport) and company are acceptable. However, the connotations of the word 'club' for those coming from what used to be the Raj, still need to be overcome. British 'clubs' bring back to Asians impressions of alcohol and licence.

So-called 'liberal' Muslims will however claim that Pakistan has a music and dance tradition of which to be proud. The national airline PIA for instance sponsored till recently a dance/drama troupe in Karachi, under the directorship of Zia Mohyeddin, that was attempting to use local folk material. However were such a group to tour here, it is virtually certain that there would be orthodox demonstrations against them. There is also a fair amount of Pakistani music—both classical and folk, from the superb vocal musicians Nazakat and Salamat Ali Khan to music played at weddings in Pakistan or at occasions like the robust polo matches in the mountain province of Gilgit. Distinctions will be made, however, by the 'good Muslim'. Music, practised for the love of it and performed in private gatherings is acceptable, explained Dr Naseem, Chairman of Birmingham's Mosque Committee; it becomes dubious when professional (and commercial).

However—even on that private level—I have been able to find no Pakistani organisation over here that at present sponsored or would like to sponsor music groups and/or tuition. A couple of young Pakistani pop music groups participated in the 1975 Asian Song Contest, but they were the exception. The Asian Youth Festival found no Pakistani young cultural groups. Some Muslim girls learn the sitar at a Coventry Community College, and Muslim boys take part in Punjabi bhangra dance groups, but those facts are—at present—remarkable.

Some liberals—Pakistani writers, poets, intellectuals—feel this is rigidity rather than religion. For them the future is one where Asians (Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis) can admit their cultural similarities and come together. The BBC Urdu/Hindu television progamme—Nai Zindagi, Naya

Jeevan—would be numbered among these, believing, said its producer Salim Shahid, in the Urdu proverb that says, why try making a wall (ie a protection for yourself) when you only have one and a half bricks?

It is doubtful whether at present the working-class community would follow the lead of some of their intellectuals. And it is clearly short-sighted to devise any structure that is out of keeping with current feeling.

We feel that the Pakistani community at present should have access to financial backing for mushairas. The amount involved could well be nominal, since there is both a pride within the community in their ability to be self-sufficient and a fear of the lessened autonomy that establishment funding strings might bring. Town halls and public halls, where necessary, could be made more available to the Pakistan community for their functions. It is striking how local authority facilities can fail to reflect the character of the area in which they are situated. The only minorities that seem to be reasonably represented in municipal programmes are the Central and Eastern Europeans —particularly Ukrainian and Poles. The disregard does—to be fair—cut both ways; the facilities available are frequently not known about in the Pakistani community, in this case, nor the means of coming by them.

Local authorities could, as a matter of course, valuably produce a list of all available premises for hire plus the methods of applications and relevant regulations. Support and access ensure two very desirable things—firstly, that facilities contributed towards by all rate payers will be available to all sections of the population; secondly, that society at large would see that minority cultures form a valuable part of the life of a local borough.

But, the critical will ask, should a traditional culture be preserved that surely —in the case of poetry—contributes nothing, because of language difference, to society at large? Part of the justification is that all rate payers, should have equal rights of access to facilities. But equally important is the value of the experience for the community itself. Urdu poetry is a living developing art that helps form the sensibilities of those who write, hear or read it by developing a sense of form, rhythm, subtlety and an appreciation of its sophisticated concepts. It is unfortunate that it is precluded as an experience for non-Urdu speakers; but at the same time that does not mean that we should be incapable of valuing it for what it is. Not only is it a considerable a.tistic achievement, but it is also part of the Pakistani community's sense of identity and self-respect, it is something positive to pass on to children who can be confused by the conflicts of the glittering West versus the apparently restrictive East. It educates the sensibilities and engenders self-respect. 'Pakistanis here,' said Dr Zaman of the Pakistani Embassy, 'don't want to cut themselves completely from Pakistani history, language, religion and culture. This urge is productive, creative, beneficial for both Pakistanis and the host community. Because only through fulfilment of that feeling can one hope for a contribution

to, a cultural enrichment of, the British way of life. If they are absorbed completely, they will contribute nothing.'

How tastes will develop is a matter for conjecture. If one looks at other communities—such as East African Asians—it would seem that as a community becomes more middle-class (and as life becomes less bound by manual labour), so its own original culture becomes more important to it. In the long term, an officer of Liverpool's Pakistani Association declared, they would like to have a centre that also offered drama, arts, music and games for young people. In the meantime, they concentrate on advice, support and religious education.

If the prospects for multi-facetted, cultural Pakistani centres are at present dim, then they are much dimmer for suggested wider associations—Asian centres, rather than smaller national units. Sensibilities would still, at present, be exacerbated amongst the current generation of adults: diets differ, religious codes differ, memories of Partition turmoil before and after 1947 are still fresh. Indeed even amongst separate Muslims or Hindu groups there are rifts. Leicester's planned Indian Centre at the time of writing has been unable to come together partly because of the conflict of internal sectional interests. The Muslims of Manchester who, before the secession of Bangladesh, had bought a Centre, now—as Muslim Pakistanis and Bangladeshis—cannot co-operate. This is not to say that Asian communities are naturally more contentious than others. Internal politics are as vivid and absorbing as in any grouping, from local ward politics to the casting of dramatic society productions. The difference is that Asian 'politics' can still be based on family or village allegiances, and aggravated by the impotence that minority status engenders.

It might well be that in the future, with greater security in a new country, that the Pakistani community might feel able openly to co-operate with others (and vice versa). And although we wholeheartedly approve of the ideal of greater openness, of opportunities for one group to appreciate another's insights and attitudes, we feel that the policy of funding bodies at present should be to support multi-racial/cultural occasions when they do seem to work (such as Coventry's Writers' Group) but not to impose that ideal as a prerequisite for funding.

The job of this Report is, however, to look at the future as well as the present. And although the grassroots feeling seems still to be for community separation (born out by the distinctly separate ethnic organisations that have spontaneously evolved), we believe that that will not necessarily be the case in even five years' time.

Our reasons for believing this are, firstly, the amount of unacknowledged 'mixing' that does take place—Saleem Shahid claims that audiences for Indian films are predominantly Pakistani: and the appeal of famous film 'playback' singers like Lata Mangeshkar (India) and Nur Jehan (Pakistan) cut cross

national boundaries; secondly, a new generation with different points of view is maturing; and thirdly, the attitudes and ideals of a sizeable number of outstanding Pakistanis (and Indians) who look forward, as an article of faith, to a future in which Asians will be able to participate in common Asian centres. This is an attitude with which this Report is in wholehearted sympathy.

The advantages of such centres are manifold. Although separate cultures deserve preserving, they also need development. That has never, anywhere, happened in isolation, but in response to contacts with new insights and modes of expression. It is important that strong, traditional cultural bases exist—around Pakistani mosques, Hindu temples and Sikh gurdwaras—but it is also vitally important to provide the vision that will allow for more flexible cross-cultural units in the future. They could also provide examples of the best work available, thus helping raise the standard of amateur Asian music and dance.

We feel that this future possibility must always be borne in mind, and welcome the 1975 Festival of Asian Youth, with its Bangladeshi and Indian participants, as a taste of future prospects. The time schedule that we would suggest is as follows—initial funding of Pakistani cultural occasions like mushairas; sympathetic financial backing for any Pakistani group or organisation that of its own accord decides to develop cultural activities. We would like to see developments monitored extremely carefully in all three Asian communities, with the idea—when conditions are ripe—of establishing a number of regional Asian centres.

The function of these should be not only to provide a context for Asian co-operation but also to provide a far more accessible base for English people to experience the age-old artistic forms of the sub-continent. At present a large number of separate Asian cultural events takes place, particularly round each country's national days. But the pity is that they are, so to speak, domestic affairs. Although some English visitors might be invited, the events are unknown by the bulk of the host community. Occuring in obscure church halls or after-hours schools, they are private events which remain private.

Regional Asian centres would provide a focus and showcase for Asian cultural activity—from young pop-groups to traditional music groups, from folk dance to classical, from workshops to other aspects like handicrafts and cookery classes or lecture courses. They would give the English the chance to get to know new forms in a situation which is less of an extended family gathering.

We believe that the funding for regional Asian centres, as for the parallel West Indian/black centre, should be a split responsibility. Their inception would need weighty capital support—surely a case for the extension of the Home Office's Urban Aid funding for black self-help groups.

We note the existence of the European Social Fund for Migrant Workers Projects. Its emphasis at present is on teaching 'migrant workers' immediate

skills necessary for their working life (ie reception, information, guidance services; language teaching; studies on possible training schemes and solutions to employment problems). However the proviso for 1/Article 4 is that operations under its heading should 'facilitate the reception and *integration* of migrant workers into their social and working environment'. Integration is unarguably a two-way process. It involves not only newcomers learning to cope with new ways, methods and languages, it also entails the host community acquiring knowledge of, understanding of, and respect for, the new ethnic minorities within their midst. Without the latter, 'integration' is but a token state.

Part One of the EEC's Social Action Programme ends in 1976, and future plans are currently being drafted. It would be encouraging were the European Commission to realise the overwhelming importance of the possible cultural contribution of minorities. We would, for instance, be heartened, were more direct schemes devised whereby funds could be granted to cultural pilot projects like Asian/West Indian regional ethnic centres that could serve as a model to the Community at large.

We would envisage them including space for films and performance (doubling with meetings and social functions), for smaller workshops and classes, for exhibitions, a library. We would also like to see an Asian centre, for instance, serving as a media resources bank for the community at large, with video, film, printing equipment for the use of Asian groups.

Clearly capital and running costs would be considerable; comparable arts centres need about £40,000 a year in subsidy. However, we must endeavour to keep a perspective, remembering for instance the £2½m annual grant that goes to the Covent Garden Opera House. The funding for Asian and black regional centres should originally come from government grants, but we would expect constant involvement in their running costs from regional arts associations, from district and county authorities (Leisure and Recreation Services, Education, and Youth). This is also an area to which the major independent grant-giving bodies such as the Gulbenkian Foundation could very valuably give their attention, not to mention commercial sponsors such as industry or banks.

As far as administration is concerned, it is of central importance that the management committee should be elected from the groups active in the area served by the regional centre in order to avoid domination by any particular interest. We would also suggest that regular open meetings be held at which the management committee can be questioned on the balance of programmes and allocation of facilities, and at which grievances (which there undoubtedly will be) can be aired. Accounts should always be available for examination. Management should either be by direct local government departments or, far

more preferably, by independently established charitable trusts, as for theatres and arts centres.

The possible value of such centres is beyond estimation. They could provide an Asian showcase for the English community (particularly the young who have responded so well to the sub-continent's music), a standard for more amateur 'domestic' cultural activities, the cross-fertilisation of interests and sympathies and, particularly for the Asian young, a place where they can see their own background culture presented with respect and professionalism.

PAKISTANIS

When the 1971 Census was taken, East and West wings of Pakistan were still intact. Since then East Pakistan has separated to form Bangladesh. The total figure for the two countries is 140,000, of which it seems probable that 80,000 are Pakistanis.

Although there is a certain amount of social mixing with Indians and Bangladeshis, Pakistani involvement in the performing arts is very much proscribed by the religion Islam. However, music is allowable, and even more popular is literature in the form of Urdu poetry performances (or Mushairas).

We recommend that:

1 local authority should fund community centres and self-help groups which offer language teaching (Urdu and Arabic) and/or cultural activities for tuition fees.

2 the British Council contribute toward the cost of Pakistani poets coming to Britain for Mushairas.

3 the Arts Council, regional arts associations and local authority contribute toward Mushairas.

4 writers' workshops be given financial support by local authority and regional arts associations towards small-scale publication of their works.

5 regional arts associations co-opt members of local Pakistani communities onto their committees; and that they endeavour to facilitate liaisons between different Asian communities in order to ensure their involvement in a future regional Asian centre, setting up a committee involving community members for that purpose.

Chapter Eight: West Indians and the African Contribution

West Indians stand in a unique position in this Report. All other communities have, without exception, been primarily concerned to preserve the traditional culture and social structures of their homeland. The arts—Polish music and dance for instance, Indian folk dance, Pakistani poetry—are an important part of a heritage that must, it is felt, be handed down to children here. Even more important is religion—Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism or the Greek and Eastern wings of the Orthodox Church—and language. All are seen as worth preserving because they have provided stability and meaning for many hundreds of unbroken years to the lives of their various peoples.

West Indians have no such continuity on which to draw. Western slave-traders wrenched them, in the sixteenth century, from their African tribal societies and disrupted a natural process of development. In the West Indies they were deliberately mingled, representatives of one tribe with another so that there was no homogeneity, no common language or social practice. Family units were similarly destroyed and as a matter of policy permanent relationships or marriage were forbidden. The result was the virtual destruction of a culture, and the creation of a dispossessed race. Memories persisted in slavery and have surfaced in, for instance, the importance of drumming, the spirit-cult of Pocomania and voodoo and the philosophy of the Rastafarian sect. But they are insubstantial elements compared with the full body of what has been left behind. Overlaid on them have been centuries of slavery; of new values, language and religion, that were largely taught in order to perpetuate the mentality of slavery.

One of the first tasks of any West Indian country after independence has been to define itself in historical and cultural terms. The task is as demanding a one as reconstructing a city from its archaeological remains, and calls for formidable energy. In concrete terms, it means the formation of national schools of art that do not merely mimic the West, the development of literature (like Wilson Harris's extraordinary novels, that delve into the myths and history of Guyana), the exploration of local, Western and African dance forms to create a relevant contemporary national style.

The majority of West Indians in this country—sixty per cent of the estimated total of 304,000—come from Jamaica, a British possession since 1670 till independence in 1962. The remainder are primarily from Trinidad,

Guyana, and Barbados; and a small number from islands like Grenada, St Lucia, Nevis, St Kitts, Cariacou, St John.

In Jamaica itself—which I visited briefly for this Report—the degree of new cultural activity was striking. At one time in Kingston there were four plays running—three by Caribbean writers. Douglas Archibald's 'The Rose Slip', an account of life in a depressed Trinidadian shanty town, was being taken round schools by the National Theatre Trust, an intermittently functioning organisation created by Lloyd Reckord. 'School's Out', a new play by Trevor Rhone (Jamaica's answer to Alan Ayckbourn) was playing at the tiny Barn Theatre. The Jamaica Playhouse company was staging a show that could only be described as Jamaican science-fiction pantomime. (The fourth show was a revue in the Pegasus Hotel's theatre, featuring a native son returned from England, the actor, Charles Hyatt.)

Only the revue at the Pegasus qualified for the term 'professional'. The only government funding so far for the performing arts, is for two sets of evening classes in dance and theatre and some funding for the NTT's schools tour. Otherwise everybody gives their time free. Some of the casts are professionals, but have to subsidise their theatre work by radio and television work. For others it's a cherished hobby for after-work hours, but one nevertheless for which they are prepared to surrender a considerable amount of spare time. Shows at the Barn Theatre, for instance, commonly run for over a year. With success, actors might get a small return out of profits; otherwise they get merely expenses. That formal Jamaican theatre is largely practised by the middle-class is hardly surprising.

The situation is the same with the National Dance Theatre Company, led by the redoubtable Rex Nettleford, who in his non-dancing hours is a professor in trade union affairs at the University of the West Indies. His disciplined group of dancers practise, rehearse, teach and perform in the evenings, taking time off work for tours. (For tours there is some government backing.)

The arts in Jamaica—notwithstanding the interest of the Prime Minister's mother, Mrs Edna Manley, a well-known sculptor in her own right—have been the result largely of private initiative. For many years Olive Lewin, for instance, had been researching and gathering the songs and folk dances of rural Jamaica before westernisation swept them away. The material she has amassed is sizeable, including smatterings in some places of Yoruba and Congolese and ritual dances that have clear links with Africa. It is only relatively recently that she was given a government job to continue her work. Miss Lewin's group of folk singers and dancers are also only part-time professional. The fledgling Jamaican film industry, largely the creation of playwright Trevor Rhone who worked with Perry Hanzel on 'The Harder They Come' and then filmed his own play 'Smile Orange', has no national film institute from which to get backing.

The level of activity is striking, from the burgeoning grassroots Rastafarian movement with its own music, painting and sculpture to the School of Art. (The latter, as a teaching establishment, is subsidised.) What is being achieved is contradictory, diverse, extraordinary and sometimes irritating. Revivalist Christianity rubs shoulders with Africa. London's conventional West End theatre (as in the Little Theatre's proscenium arch and end-stage) rubs shoulders with the occasional more open-ended experiment. Dance forms being evolved take in Caribbean folk dance (with its British influence), African, modern dance and a touch of ballet. It is all a process of discovery—sometimes abortive, sometimes imitative, but frequently exciting.

The same sort of contradictions and differences are echoed in Britain, in what is loosely called the West Indian community. There is theatre work, like that of the group Temba, which draw its strength from Western theatrical traditions. But there are also ad hoc groups of poets and drummers who are trying to extend the written word and perform in 'ghetto' situations. There are both Caribbean folk dance groups like Gloria Cameron's in Brixton and Captain Fish in Clapham and African-Caribbean classes and groups at the West Indian Students Centre and Islington's black centre, Keskidee. There are established playwrights like Alfred Fagon, Barry Reckord, Mustafa Matura, Michael Abensetts, Thomas Baptiste and T-Bone Wilson, but also groups that write their own material as the Fasimbas did in their regrettably now defunct dramas that were both incisive and hilarious, or as do the St Lucian group, Hewanorra. There are new young music groups, but also revivalist church choirs and performers like Birmingham's excellent Singing Stewarts.

The range is wide, the products frequently unstable. Difficulties abound. Performing artists have the same initial problem as Asians and Cypriots: their own audiences are from mainly rural stock whose theatre is drawn more from religion and social rituals, like marriage and funerals, than going to watch a play. England's own community theatre group—like Belt and Braces, 7:84 or Mikron—have had the same dilemma in their aim of attracting non-theatre-going audiences.

There are however differences. The English groups mentioned above have ready-made venues in which to meet with their audiences. Mikron, a travelling group that presents musical entertainment about the history of the inland waterways, performs mainly in canal-side pubs. Belt and Braces and 7:84 search out their working-class audiences in, among other formal venues, trade union clubs, community associations and political conferences. There is no reason why black theatre groups should not play the same venues—we would indeed welcome it—any more than there is any reason for black people not to be part of the audience for each. But certainly in order to attract mass black working audiences a theatre group would have to work its way into their

language and concerns just as English groups have had to do with their audiences. Although there is naturally an overlap, probably the most successful plays with West Indian audiences have been in patois which is hard for non-West Indians. There is a great deal of virgin territory to be broken in taking theatre and dance groups to West Indian audiences—something I will come back to later.

West Indians also have the problems engendered by low social status. Countless reports have shown them at the bottom of the ladder—in employment, education, housing. English community arts has received its impetus from the young middle-classes who not only have the confidence to manipulate structures and use facilities but can also set their faces against materialistic success. Many a black theatre group has fallen apart because members have had the opportunity to do both lucrative and prestigious television or West End theatre work.

Nevertheless the work that has at times emerged and could do so in the future is potentially extremely exciting. It is exciting for the very reason it is disadvantaged—that there is no traditional body of work behind it. Hence each development is a discovery; and at their very best, West Indian arts have expressed a concern with conditions in this country that no other ethnic community group yet does. For this reason in particular we feel it vitally important that they be encouraged, and that far more opportunities for community participation in them be created.

There are two main areas needing encouragement. One is the creation or opening up of facilities at a working level: the institution of a tour circuit, the provision of premises or the better-endowment of existing ones, financial aid by local authorities or regional arts associations. The other is to ensure that both artists and groups are drawn into the top section of the so-called cultural pyramid. Black performers are notably thin on the ground in British classical dance companies. No black actor had been able to set his sights on a leading role in the National Theatre (or indeed as a permanent member of any repertory company) beyond the now stock role for black actresses in 'The National Health'. Only black music groups feature with relative frequency on television. It is no accident that there are many aspiring young black musicians. All people respond to the demonstrated existence of opportunities.

It has been said, with much justice, that all West Indian arts are community arts. However, there is a great deal of interrelation between community arts and so-called 'high art'. The visit of the Harlem Dance Theatre turned many black youngsters' thoughts to dance as a possible activity. Several youth leaders I spoke to after this visit talked about the possibility of a dance workshop, and one class actually started in Liverpool to be followed by another in Leeds' Chapeltown. When the black theatre group, Temba, tours

its director Alton Kumalo gets regular letters from young black people asking if he runs a training school.

However, before proposing remedies or action, it must be reported that this study encountered more suspicion in the West Indian community than in any other. Occasionally people entirely refused to talk—either because they had been over-researched for studies that did nothing to change situations or because they believed the West Indian community should work out its own solutions or, in the case of the writer Andrew Salkey, because they believed the Report's sources of finance were 'buffers between the government and the people'. The number of people who refused point blank to speak was small. The number of people who however required convincing that anything worthwhile might come out of it was not. It is totally understandable cynicism.

Side-by-side with suspicion, however, went a valuable desire for independence. Many groups, like Leeds' United Caribbean Association, disliked the idea of financial strings. Others like the Black Theatre of Brixton were interested in grant-aid to get what they hoped would be an ultimately self-financing project off the ground. Others like Gloria Cameron's dance group which has been going, in some form, for thirteen years or Leeds' Uhuru, would like assistance towards items like transport rather than towards revenue assistance.

Despite these desires for independence, however, it must be recognised that the arts are labour-intensive and expensive, particularly in these economically fraught times. Even the most independent of groups like the Ukrainians and Poles are beginning to sense difficulties. Groups may want to have minimal attachments to funding organisations, but that is as unlikely, certainly for professional and performing groups, as for host-community cultural groups.

The world of West Indian arts does not respond readily to categorisation. However, for the sake of clarity, I shall divide it into five sections: community arts; dance; drama; fine arts, literature and the printed word; and housing the arts. These categories are rather artificial and overlaps are considerable, as will become obvious.

1 Community Arts

Two phenomena—no other word describes them adequately—have burst their way into public knowledge from West Indian community arts. One is the Carnival (particularly Notting Hill's), the other is the steel band.

Nothing quite like Carnival has been seen in Britain before. It out-fêtes fêtes and outranks festivals. In its native Trinidad this pre-Lenten explosion, is huge, glittering, exotic, noisy. For much of the previous year groups and 'maas' bands prepare their designs in strictest secrecy, emerging at festival

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time with dazzling costumes and structures towering high in the air. The subjects come from mythology, history, natural history, science-fiction or indeed anything under the sun. And although critics feel that it is now becoming too institutionalised—it is no longer possible for non-performers to dance along with the bands in the street—it still acts as a potent draw to hundreds of overseas Trinidadians, to return home especially for this event.

In 1965, a social worker in Notting Hill started a local West Indian Carnival. Few at that modest occasion could have predicted its growth over the following ten years. Although 1975 was still a pale imitation of Trinidad, it was nevertheless a mass occasion for which roads were effectively closed and buses diverted.

Estimates by its organisers for attendance at the Notting Hill August Bank Holiday event was a million over its two days. Indeed, to anyone jammed in the mixed black and white crowds, it must have seemed more. The air was full of strident sounds—rock, reggae or steel band creeping through the throng on slow lorries, the distant beat of another approaching band, disco music from sound systems in side streets, laughter, singing, street-vendors abounded. No: commercial Wimpies but home-made patties, roti, curry goat, rice and peas. 'Come and get them, fresh and hot!' shouted the women. Good will and some euphoria ruled. 'Bless you, little baby,' said a middle-aged West Indian benignly, stopping his private dance to kiss my infant's bare toes. Meanwhile after the floats came the dancers, exotically clad. Thirty-odd Vikings jogged by, dressed in sequins and red fur miniskirts, an African group from the Sukuya carnival project, insects, fish and devilish devils. Any planning seemed to have broken down (it could hardly fail to have done so in such a turn out). Floats met head on and jostled for ascendancy of sound. Another lorry with a man dancing ecstatically on the roof of the cabin set off mysteriously in the general direction of Oxford. No-one minded, bewildering though it occasionally was. Even the crews of the marooned buses, standing chatting by their steaming engines, seemed high on the atmosphere.

Notting Hill's Carnival was a triumph for its twelve local organisers, despite some criticism within the community of autocracy, and otherwise of disorganisation. Leslie Palmer, the Carnival Committee's Secretary, had aimed at having every single black group in London there. Ultimately there were a dozen steel bands, another two dozen music groups and six 'maas' groups. The budget for the entire two-day extravaganza plus the preceding night's dance at the Hammersmith Palais was £3,755. Some income came in from selling licences to street vendors, but nevertheless the Carnival could not but make a loss. Subsidies were small—£300 from Kensington and Chelsea Royal Borough Council, channelled through its own local Arts Association (£200) and its Community Relations Council (£100); £1,000 was routed by the

Arts Council through the Greater London Arts Association for a related photographic and costume exhibition; £500 came from GLAA itself, and was matched by the Arts Council Community Arts Committee; the central Community Relations Commission did not contribute because they could not back an event for more than two consecutive years.

That the sums contributed were not large does not necessarily reflect meanness on the part of the givers. None of them have large art budgets. The Arts Council grant came from the very straitened Community Arts Budget. In 1974/75 the Festivals Committee of GLAA had £15,890 to spend on 45 local festivals. Local community relations have very little funds available for cultural activities. What the low sums do represent, though, is the classification of the Notting Hill Carnival, as a community arts event and community relations exercise. Both categories have low priorities in the grant-aiding organisations and are in no way designed for the mass festival that Notting Hill has become. GLAA's support quite largely tends to go to festivals that are local, small-scale events, family festivals. The CRC, as well as local community relations councils, have the arts low down on their priorities.

Other more immediate visible and socially-useful schemes come first. Although this is understandable, we believe that the CRC could now usefully reconsider its role as arts-funder so as to make greater sums available.

The CRC (and local crc's) are in a special position vis-à-vis ethnic minority groups, in that they have more expertise than, say, local government. However, the tendency of local government to push the responsibility for funding projects by ethnic artists onto them, is one that should be resisted since it potentially leads to separatism. The CRC and its local bodies have a valuable function to play in lobbying for arts and artists that they probably know more of at present than do local authorities. But there is certainly a feeling amongst ethnic minority artists that the funding they occasionally receive from the former is more connected to their racial origins than to the merit of their work. This is doubtless unfair (with an arts budget of only £4,500, value judgements must come in). However, it is a suspicion that the CRC (or future RRC) could scotch by developing closer links via its branches with Arts and Leisure departments of local authorities and with regional arts associations. Again, the CRC can usefully pin-point new developments which later can be helped by local authorities or regional arts associations.

Similarly, the CRC would be an appropriate funder for large events (or structures as regional ethnic arts centres) that carry ethnic minority culture to the host-community and further 'harmonious race relations'. The Notting Hill Carnival is one of these, and it is likely that other similar events will follow in its wake. Leeds Carnival for instance is three years younger and more compact, but has a strong following, with participants and observers coming

from other northern towns. In 1975, on a budget of £2,400 the Committee ran a carnival that involved four steel bands and 464 costumed 'maas' dancers. £200 for the event came from the Leeds Community Relations Council, and £50 from their patrons, Lord and Lady Harewood. Otherwise they managed to raise money by a series of dances (at which the average attendance was 520). Yorkshire Arts Association (the regional arts association) had given them a much appreciated £86 in 1974, but, they say, were too poor in the following year to continue their support. The prospects for this extremely well-organised carnival are not good, despite its popularity and valuable function for all communities. Next year they have been told they cannot expect further help from Leeds CRC. This is surely a case for wholehearted involvement from the central CRC, local authority and regional arts association.

What is moreover seldom realised is that festivals like these are on-going processes, not one-off events. Planning starts a considerable amount of time ahead, not only by the organisers but also by the participants. In order that standards may rise and a good show be produced it is indeed necessary for this preparation to happen. Funding needs to take that aspect into account. Organisers must get applications in early, but funding bodies should also realise the crucial importance of time.

Ian Charles of the Leeds Carnival Committee, for instance, would like to know that a definite sum of money will be available long before the financial years begins in April. With the security of a definite grant they could give small amounts to designers and costume-makers to encourage them to raise their sights and not be out of pocket. They could also enter into contracts with bands for their many hours' work rather than the token amounts and casual agreements which are all they can now afford. As it is, both he and Notting Hill's Leslie Palmer find themselves still waiting for potential grant-givers' decisions only a few months—weeks, in one instance—before their respective festivals.

Large-scale festivals of this type—that are anticipated and enjoyed by thousands—surely quality for as solid a backing as do 'establishment' festivals like York, Northampton, Brighton and so on. Large formal music festivals, like Bath's for instance, enjoys far greater continuity and rapport with its funders.

All too frequently in the field of ethnic minority arts, there is both minimal initiative from funding bodies and lack of 'push' from the artists. We would like, in the case of festivals, to see local district and county authorities and regional arts associations liaise with organisers long before the event. We would like to see a previous year's grant being taken as a basis—if the festival has not changed in character—for the following year. We would like

to see large-scale events taken out of budgetary areas designed for smaller occasions and given more adequate support.

There are other areas in which local authorities in particular can be valuably involved. In the case of schools, children could be encouraged to create their own costumes and join carnivals that take place in term-time; youth clubs could enter bands. Some local authorities already provide facilities like free or subsidised premises, free advertisement stickers in buses and other advertising—all very useful support. Notting Hill Carnival would like more help in closing streets, traffic control and provision of necessary items like mobile lavatories.

Carnival can spread its wings even further than its immediate concerns. In Notting Hill, for instance, there are signs of spin-off activity, which make current council suggestions to move it out off the streets to White City Stadium even more dispiriting. In both 1974 and 1975 there have been related photographic exhibitions in the area. In addition, 1975 saw a successful ten-day occasion under Westway motorway involving West Indian poets, painters, craftsmen and photographers. This was organised by a new group called Caribbean Cultural International who are currently looking for premises of their own. Its budget for the event was £550, which came from GLAA, the CRC and British Council of Churches. A youth group, Sukuya, based in Marylands Community Centre spent several months with four salaried youth workers, ambitiously researching into African tribal wear and music and created its own elaborate costumes. Seventeen hundred pounds for this came from the Arts Council Community Arts Committee.

These are all examples of what could be done with perceptive funding. Other carnivals will surely rise to follow those of Notting Hill and Leeds. Nottingham, Lewisham, Manchester, Kirklees (Huddersfield) and Cardiff have all had their own West Indian carnivals though none could rank with either of the above.

In Britain, as in Trinidad, steel drums form an integral part of Carnival. They're a recent growth in the Caribbean—a prime example of democratic do-it-yourself community music. 'At the end of World War II,' writes Trinidad's Director of Culture, M.P. Alladin, 'people spontaneously paraded the streets, singing calypsos and dancing. Having been denied Carnival for five years, and having now none of the regular musical instruments, they improvised "percussive" music with odds and ends—wooden and cardboard boxes, old tins, pieces of iron, biscuit tins and dustbins. Junkheaps provided oil-drums, wheel-hubs etc.' Gradually the oil-drum took precedence and by slowly more sophisticated methods was tuned and developed so that a whole range of notes and possibilities was achieved. From providing merely a rhythm beat, steel drums can now play anything up to transposed classical symphonies.

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In this country, steel bands have long been popular entertainment for West Indian dances. They are slowly percolating into the host-community, on occasions like Yorkshire's Bahamas Steel Band's gig at Batley Working Men's Club. However, they are particularly making their mark in the educational system, many schools and also youth clubs having their own steel bands. The Inner London Education Authority knows of 20 in its area. The popularity of the music was immediately noticeable at the Schools Steel Band Festival at the Commonwealth Institute in both 1974 and 1975. There were about a hundred participants, on the first occasion ranging in age from eight to nineteen years old, black and white, boys and girls. Some were chastely in school uniform. Other teams were dressed in colourful group costumes. Their music was similarly varied—from Lambeth Youth Steel Band's traditional Jamaican folk song, Linstead Market, to Nottingham's Huntingdon Junior School's Sonata Pathetique. If the variety was diverse, opinions on steel bands were similar. All the groups wanted to see them accepted as instruments in their own right: for instance accompanying a local school choir. Some saw them as an excellent exercise in community relations between different ethnic backgrounds and also between the school and parents. Leicester's junior school band at the Highfields Community Centre, for instance, now has an active parents' support group. Although the pans had mainly been bought through an Education Department grant, some schools like Creighton School in Muswell Hill had run discos, sold buns and organised play-ins for a year to raise the necessary £400.

The groups' feelings about the status of steel drums is reflected in school curricula. Some of them give space to steel bands, but others still leave them as an extra after-hours activity. James Cummings of Croydon Community Relations Council who has done much to sponsor the music's development in schools feels that this is a mistake. So far no schools have pushed them to be made part of GCE 'O' Level Music, as Felix Cobbson has done in Harlow with African drumming, although one youngster in Ealing recently did his CSE in the theory of steel music. Certainly steel band music has enough substance to justify its being more than a community relations leisure project.

There seems to be a need for a general standard to be established for steel bands—in performance, teaching and tuning. Festivals such as the schools' one and the Steel Bands Festival (organised by Macdonald Bailey, Terry Noel and Lesley Scaife) in 1975 provide valuable exposure to performers, and an opportunity for cross-fertilisation. The latter would have benefited from preliminary heats in the regions, something which they had neither time nor money to organise.

The DES and education authorities could usefully support in-service training courses for teachers in steel band music and workshops for tutors. Youth club organisations like the National Association of Boys Clubs could also organise

courses for leaders. There is also a need for a course in tuning steel drums. The Inner London Educational Authority and Caribbean Cultural Foundation (who supply steel drums), are currently looking at the question of teaching ability, and this should reduce the risk of poor teachers.

Many other organisations—both youth and adult—could draw the music in to their activities: The National Federation of Music Societies, the British Federation of Music Festivals, Youth and Music, the Standing Conference of Amateur Music. Local authorities who for instance subsidise brass bands generously in the North of England could turn their attention to local steel bands. It is satisfying that both the Times Schools Music Festival in 1975 and the National Schools Music Association included steel bands. We would like to see them get still wider exposure.

In 1974 Greater Manchester Education Authority imaginatively asked one of its staff to take on responsibility for Ethnic Music. David Wainwright's brief covers Indian, African, West Indian and English folk music. So far he has organised six teach in/concerts at Manchester schools, to which groups from other schools have been brought. The city also now owns two sets of pans, at Ducie and Birley High Schools. Progress has, he feels, been slow; to his surprise, the main initial interest and support came initially more from middle-class girls' schools (including convents) than ethnically mixed working-class schools. And even though there is now more representative participation, it is by no means as high as he would like. The moral appears to be that the level of Wainwright's appointment is too low to bring pressure onto educational policy and he has too low a budget to sponsor an expansive programme. For ethnic music to make a really positive contribution to the musical experience of children, a commitment needs to be made at a high policy level.

Nevertheless, Manchester, for all the doubts it engenders, is, with ILEA, among the best of the local authorities in this regard. Few educational departments provided any evidence of a firm policy of drawing on musical traditions other than European. It is unfortunate that schools, the opinion-forming institutions that make such impact on the young, should disregard what are not only highly developed traditions but also means to extend their pupils' boundaries of knowledge and respect.

Youth clubs are another area where ethnic minority arts, and music in particular, are by no means as fully employed as possible.

The Hunt Report, 'Immigrants and the Youth Service' (1967) stressed the popularity of sports in youth club activities. However there is no denying the equal potential popularity for young West Indians or black British of music—of steel band or reggae. In visits to youth clubs I also found an interest amongst black youngsters in dance, and some in drama. Very few clubs sponsored classes in either. Coventry's Holyhead Youth Centre has a boys' dance group who apparently do 'shuffling'; Cardiff's Bute Town Youth

Centre had a rather pop-oriented dance group for a time, till they lost their teacher and the class died. London's Metro Youth Club has had a well-attended course in African drumming. Manchester's Hideaway has an African dance group. The examples are not profuse.

On the other hand not only youngsters expressed some interest in the arts, but also some youth leaders. Winston Pindar, of Kentish Town Youth Club for instance, was keen to foster a dance project. The Ghanaian music and dance troupe, Sankofa, had rehearsed there and stimulated interest among his members. His problem was finding suitable teachers—people with not only knowledge and training, but the capability of relating to young people. Charlie Moor of Moss Side Youth Centre in Manchester was in a similar situation, as was Earle Robinson at Leicester's busy Highfields Community Centre.

What is clearly necessary is a register for ethnic minority arts open to consultation by anyone. Its function should be to create contacts: teachers with would-be pupils, arts organisers and schools with performers, groups with possible venues. However, because of the very shifting nature of much of the ethnic cultural world, it is essential that the Register be kept regularly up to date. In the data assembled by the researches for this Report, it was clear that the supply of possible teachers runs short of potential demand. Far more teachers of dance, drama, music, painting, photography and crafts could be used than appear at present to be in the field.

In this aspect, the West Indian world also stands apart from the other ethnic minorities of this Report. The reasons are obvious. In particular it is because other groups concentrate largely on keeping alive the folk cultures of their original homelands, a folk culture still known to many of their people. Teachers, though sometimes needing some locating, are not wanting.

Young West Indians however very often want more than a replica of the West Indies' folk music, crafts and dances. They want, for their own self-respect, to learn something of their African roots. The group Agor-Mmba (now Steel and Skin) meet such a need with their lively music and folk-story sessions, particularly in schools. In addition, particularly where poetry performances are concerned, youngsters want work that will be a critique of their present situation. Carried into the area of dance, that means a fusion of modern Western with African styles. Not surprisingly it is a demand that few teachers are qualified to fulfil.

Some exist, and are necessarily overstretched: Olkun Ogunde in Manchester; Terry Remain in Bristol; in London, Elroy Josephs, Neville Braithwaite, Edison Egbe, Raymond McLean, Felix Cobbson, Jeannette Springer, Basil Wanzira. The black graduates of the London Contemporary Dance School, having few job prospects in Britain, unfortunately almost all go to good contracts on the Continent. Groups (largely Caribbean folk-based) exist that take in youngsters as well as young adults—Bristol's Caribbean

Dance Team, Captain Fish in Clapham, Caribbean Showboat in Tooting, Elroy Josephs' own Workshop No 7 and Egbe's own group originally based at the East London bookshop, Centerprise.

Each group of the last category is in financial need. Some organisations exist that provide examples of African culture—the Commonwealth Institute with their exhibitions, performers, and travelling lecturer-demonstrators; London's Africa Centre that mounts exhibitions, organises lectures and holds classes. (Their day-long class, by the group Adwe, early this year on African drumming was sold out within days of its announcement); North London's Keskidee Centre that holds classes by members of the group Sankofa in African dance, does African and West Indian plays and holds exhibitions of sculpture and masks. The fine Nigerian sculptor Emanuel Jegede also works at Keskidee; London's Dance Centre has an African class, but very much a pick-up class for professionals.

The interconnection between African artists and West Indians is both one of the most interesting aspects of this Report, and a relationship that should be encouraged. Indeed, some, though by no means all, Africans felt that their arts deserved a separate section in this Report. That there is not one is no reflection on the richness of the work—as evidenced by the drum workshop, Adwe, writers like Yemi Ajibade and Lari Williams, dance groups like Sankofa and Felix Cobbson's spirited young multiracial group doing Ghanian dances and drumming, the sculptors, painters and craftsmen. Their inclusion in this section is intended to underline the invaluable connection they especially have to offer those of West Indian origin, in addition to being artists in their own rights. Artists like Jegede and Euzo Eguno have much to offer West Indian youth in particular. (Indeed, they also have much to offer the community at large that is little recognised.) Work of West Indian painters like Roy Caboo and Ossie Murray demonstrate the effect of the African influence. The many African clubs of Liverpool—the Ibo Club, the Yoruba Club, the Federal Nigerian Club—made extremely popular contributions to the 1974 Granby Festival. It is to be hoped that the reception of their splendid music and dance items will encourage them to institute more on-going cultural activities.

However, apart from West Indians and Africans with knowledge brought from home, teachers of the arts are thin on the ground. Many of the present teachers have been established for quite a few years. Little new blood seems to be coming in to nourish young would-be black dance groups.

Not only that, but little inter-connection seems to take place; groups work in isolation, knowing little of each other, failing to co-operate and maybe share expertise and resources, desperate for teachers who might in fact exist, unknown to them, in a nearby town. It is relevant that when the Cardiff dance class ended, for lack of a teacher, that a dance group was active in nearby

Bristol who might surely—had the need been known—have been able to provide a weekly teacher. Here again we believe that a Register would be valuable.

There are other sources of untapped teachers. Teacher-training colleges at present appear to give little information to students about working with youth projects. Indeed, we have had some calls from trainee teachers who wanted to know which community projects might be able to use their skills. (And only two colleges—Dartington and Trent Park—offer courses in ethnic minority arts.)

Local education authorities themselves could compile a list for general circulation of full-time teachers who are interested in using their skills after hours with youth and community groups. It would involve little extra work were education authorities to ask incoming teachers whether they were interested in being on such a list.

Formally trained teachers are not the only answer. No-one has ever been able to define the qualities that make a good teacher. In the arts, it's likely to be not the right academic qualification, but rather a commitment to their artistic field, a desire to develop it, and pass it on. It is encouraging that the Inner London Education Authority is prepared to accept unqualified arts teachers with special skills (such as Indian music and dance) and not place them on a lower salary because of their lack of formal qualifications. Other authorities should take note of this sensible practice.

A pool of travelling arts teachers is an idea worth examining. This could be an extension of ILEA's Poets' Register (a system where poets, paid by ILEA, are sent to schools) or the Commonwealth Institute's comparable scheme whereby they give artists a wage and send them as lecturer-demonstrators into schools. We believe that local education and youth departments should liaise with those of other authorities and pay artist-teachers to visit certain youth clubs or community centres regularly (both host-community and ethnic clubs). An initial intensive three-month course in each seems desirable, leading to a demonstration or performance at the end of that period. Groups would moreover benefit from taking their work to other centres, and also from participating in amateur youth competitions. (The Moonshine Arts Project in North London is currently organising a drama festival on this principle, involving a number of groups from different youth clubs.)

Performance is extremely useful. Not only does it give groups a goal, and audience reaction and criticism, but it also gives them a great sense of achievement. There were two occasions on which I have been especially impressed—one in Jamaica where I travelled to the north of the island with a group of young folk dancers. Theirs was by no means an easy engagement. It was to be in one of the Ocho Rios' gruesome luxury hotels, and the youngsters were

taciturn—not to say unfriendly—before the performance. When it was over and all the tourists with their popping flash-bulbs had gone to bed, the change in the young people was remarkable. They suddenly became confident and garrulous, feeling that they could take on the world. Something of the same feeling came over at London's Henry Thornton School in Clapham Common. Here a mixed, black and white, group of children put on an extremely buoyant and witty evening of sketches in Spring, 1975 that released a similar wave of confidence.

Sadly, Henry Thornton's evening was seen only by privileged friends of the school and parents. There must be a considerable amount of comparable schools' activity that also never gets wider exposure. Some—like Stuart Hop's enormously popular dance class at Goldsmiths College (attended largely by black Deptford youngsters), the popular dance activity at Tower Hamlets School for girls or activities in Brent's schools have come to the notice of this Report. Others, like the work of both youth and adult groups in all the minorities of this Report, have such a small catchment area that they are little known about outside it.

Here I would like to sidestep and describe a system currently operating in Jamaica. Its relevance is that it acts as an incentive to, in particular cultural activity amongst the young.

Its culmination occurs every year in August, around Independence Day, in a massive cultural jamboree. The work presented then falls into ten official classes, from the predictable Literature, Music, Dance, Music and Drama to less obvious categories like Festival Song Competition and Culinary Arts. However what is especially interesting is not the festival, but the previous years' preparation.

As far as dance is concerned (the other categories are roughly comparable), the pre-organisation is as follows. First of all comes an intensive three-week seminar for forty school teachers held by the National Dance Theatre Company. (This is largely financed by Berger Paints Ltd; the government helps through the Ministry of Education by providing transport for teachers and subsistence costs.) After the course, the teachers return to their schools and start working on dances with their pupils (who form 70% of the total dance entrants). At intervals they return to the NDTC to demonstrate work-in-progress, getting in return criticism and analysis. The object, said one of the examiners (a member of the NDTC), was to give the dancers a self-critical objectivity, and an understanding of the standards and value-judgements believed desirable.

The examiners themselves then visit every parish in the island, classifying the dances according to the syllabus laid down; the categories ranging from traditional (like the African Kumina dance still performed in the parish of St Thomas) to Modern and Folk Ballet. (Other national dances are also

allowed, which is why, in Clarendon, I suddenly caught a glimpse of bejewelled jingly-ankletted Indian maidens.)

The next stage is the parish finals, then regional finals. Finally comes the Gold Medal concert in Kingston where the Performing Arts Council (a nascent Arts Council) picks the winners. The whole process has resulted, in all fields, in a spate of energy. In 1962—the first year—only 27 dance entries were received. By 1975, it was in several hundreds. And although examiners in several sections groaned about repetitiveness and unimaginative imitation, no-one would have expected that every entry would be newly creative.

That structure shows what can be done with dance and other forms. It is the sort of stimulation that we would like to see applied to this country not only for West Indian British, but indeed for all the community. Amateur youth music and drama festivals do exist, but there is little evidence that they have so far drawn on ethnic minority forms.

There is, however, in the Jamaican example one focal point. That is the National Dance Theatre Company.

2 Dance

The place played by Jamaica's National Dance Theatre Company in generating dance activity in the island is central. It also demonstrates a great lack in Britain. Firstly, there is no place for community teachers and school teachers to go for a similarly intensive workshop. Secondly no such professional outlet exists for professional black dancers. There are only a handful of black dancers with national ballet companies. Indeed, it was reported by a dance-critic that one undoubtedly talented black girl was told, after her audition, that it would be wiser if she applied to Arthur Mitchell's Harlem Dance Theatre in America.

Obviously we would welcome the doors of the Royal Ballet and others being opened to black dancers, in the way that opera (to some initial outcry) opened its doors only relatively recently to black singers. However, that is not the whole answer. Classical ballet is only part of the dance discipline currently in demand. Indeed, many West Indians and black British would dismiss it as irrelevant to their traditions. A similar change of over-sophisticated irrelevance was part of the rise, in America, of modern dance, a form that has proved far more attractive to black youngsters. In addition, however, there is, as explained earlier, great interest in Afro-Caribbean traditions in general, not least in dance.

Professional Modern Dance classes do exist—particularly at London's the Place and the Dance Centre. Two features of both these institutions are however troubling—firstly that they get few black applicants and secondly that

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their black graduates have extremely dire job prospects in this country. The two points are clearly connected.

In 1974, the Greater London Arts Association commissioned a feasibility study for a black dance company, a step that was partly inspired by the electric response of the black community to the American Harlem Dance Company.

The conclusions of the study by John T. E. Mapondera was that a school and company were both desirable and feasible. It recommended that courses be given in classical ballet, in a form of Modern Dance and in Afro-Caribbean dance. Above all it stressed the importance of touring not only accepted dance venues, but also schools, adult education institutes and community centres. They are conclusions that this Report endorses.

The dearth of dance teachers has already been described. However, even if Britain were well-supplied, lack of outlets would eventually drain enthusiasm. Constant demonstration is needed that dance can offer a good career. This can only come from a national black dance company with a brief to tour widely. It would also be responsible for training future teachers and organising in-service courses.

As important as improving the quality and quantity of dancers is building up audiences. One objection commonly made to black dance or theatre companies is that there is no ready-made audience: that theatre is outside the West Indian tradition. In the sense that English theatre is not in the working class tradition, this is right. But this is not to say that West Indian audiences will not turn out for something that seems relevant to their own experience. At the most simple level, tours like that of the Brixton theatre group, the Dark and Light, got audiences often because of its rarity value: here was a group largely of black actors, as opposed to the near unbroken stream of white actors appearing on television.

There *is* a potential West Indian audience. It could be seen for instance in 1973 with the visit of the Jamaica Folk Singers. After three concerts at London's Commonwealth Institute, they visited Brixton, Greenwich, Hornsey, Manchester, Leicester, Birmingham and Cardiff. With the exception of the first three dates, writes Ms Pamela Beshoff, the High Commisssion's Information Officer, 'The attendance was a largely Jamaican one. As you know, these concerts were not promoted by a professional agency and the enthusiasm and good will of the Jamaican community was largely responsible for the resounding success of the tour. In fact it was obvious to the organisers that the Jamaican community in Britain had a very real thirst for the folk songs which are part of Jamaica's cultural heritage. The tour was organised entirely by Jamaicans living in Britain. Although it suffered in some respects from a lack of professional management, culturally it was tremendously rewarding.'

In the dance field, a similar response was evident at performances of the

Harlem Dance Company in London and Manchester. (The visit has had its spin-offs—firstly in the establishment of dance classes in Liverpool and Leeds for youngsters, and secondly in the GLAA feasibility study.) Other examples of community response belong more properly in the theatre section. Suffice to say that those events that have failed have done so by the cardinal sin of not considering their audiences, whether it be in organisation (having weekday performances) or in simply presenting ill-formed, badly thought out work. Lack of response to these occasions is not peculiar to the West Indian community.

We believe that a professional black dance company is desirable—firstly, because it is necessary to stir the ambitions of potentially talented young people; secondly to give more range, exposure and experience to trained dancers; thirdly to help shape varying dance traditions behind West Indians into a viable shape; fourthly to provide not only West Indians but also all possible audiences with entertainment of a high standard. That the talent is there is evident from the quality and enthusiasm of pupils at the Place, Dance Centre and Rambert school as well as at less formal classes like those at the West Indian Student Centre. Even were the establishment British companies to build racially integrated companies (which we hope will happen), there is still a need for a new form, a form that accommodates the work at present being done. Such a growth could be as valuable as America's sturdy Harlem Dance Company.

3 Drama

When we come to drama, the arbitrary nature of these divisions becomes clear. The most experimental West Indian theatre work ignores them. Dance or movement is used to complement speech (as in the Wall Theatre), drumming underpins poetry (as in the Black Theatre of Brixton), music is interwoven with poetry and satire (as in the work of RAPP—Radical Alliance of Poets and Players). The Theatre of Black Youth has combined Kung Fu with straight dramatic narrative. The disciplines are wound together in an attempt to find a new form. And if not all the work being done succeeds in making something coherent and strong, that is no cause for surprise. New forms do not spring up fully fledged overnight, as is evident from the development of white British fringe theatre groups.

Interestingly, it is only in the West that music, dance, poetry and drama have become segregated into different disciplines. Originally—as in miracle plays or even in Shakespeare—a dramatic occasion embraced all four and its seriousness was by no means diminished. Even a cursory glance at the Third World will show this intermingling still exists. If you look for theatre in India, although there are many Hindi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Bengali, Tamil plays and

others now written in the Western mode, the real theatrical vitality lies in forms like dance theatre such as Kathakali, in strolling satirical players and puppeteers, and in popular festivals like Dussehra (a kind of religious Guy Fawkes Day when giant effigies of the demonic enemies of Rama explode in a blaze of flame and firecrackers).

Ritual, music and dance—all intermingled—was the dominant factor in Robert Serumaga's Ugandan group who brought 'Renga Moi' to the 1975 World Theatre Season. 'Renga Moi' was the story of a warrior who had to chose whether to defend his village or to save his new-born sons.

Serumaga's achievement was firstly to explore a moral conflict through traditional elements of performance, and secondly to question tradition itself by their means.

The combination of disciplines clearly impressed many black theatre people. What was disappointing was that there was no related follow-through to the performances. When the group performed in Jamaica they did a series of workshops to introduce their methods of working—a process that had already resulted, in the summer of 1975, in one Serumaga-influenced production. Unfortunately, no comparable workshop structure has yet been properly established in this country, though its benefits are manifest. Though valuable for all forms of artistic activity across the board, it is particularly important for all ethnic minority groups since they are far more isolated from related forms of work. Far more use could be made of visiting companies at a seminal level—for instance with a black theatre workshop supported in principle by Equity and its Afro-Asian Artists Association, with community theatre and dance groups flourishing among most ethnic minorities, with youth clubs and school groups. We would like to see such workshops organised and funded by the Arts Council, local authorities and regional arts associations and believe that they could help cut down the cultural isolation of both host community participants and minorities.

The position of visiting overseas troupes in general at present gives cause for alarm. Ironically, it is in London where the situation is fraught, rather than in the regions. In London the most appropriate venue for a large national music and dance company is Sadlers Wells. Between 1969 and 1974 it was host to 39 overseas dance, opera, drama and music groups—from Japanese Kabuki to the Jamaica National Dance Theatre Company, from Cologne Opera to the Dutch National Ballet. The advantage of the theatre, said Douglas Craig, Clerk to the Governors, is its size and amenities: it can easily be used by foreign companies with minimum adaptations. However, economics are forcing Sadlers Wells to curtail their programme. The Dutch National Ballet has had to give up appearing there since the theatre (unlike all other theatres in other countries where they appear) cannot afford to give them a guarantee against loss.

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National folk ensembles often play to small though enthusiastic audiences, so they will have to be cut down in number.

It is extraordinary that drama companies coming to the Aldwych's World Theatre Season were—quite rightly—reasonably subsidised by the Arts Council (through its annual grant to the RSC) and by the GLC, while similar cultural visits from overseas at Sadlers Wells (or anywhere else) get scarcely any support. The principle behind the World Theatre Season is an important one—the importance of bringing in new work to broaden the horizons of and to stimulate both theatre people and ordinary audiences. We would like to see that principle extended and far more visiting groups supported at a range of levels: from, say, a tour by Jamaica's Barn Theatre or National Theatre Trust in community venues to support for organisations who bring over—often at a loss—first-rate Indian classical musicians to major concert halls, from teaching workshops to mass recitals.

The previous sub-section dealt with the frustrated situation of the young black would-be dancer. Where theatre is concerned the position is equally bad. Horizons are similarly limited. An Equity survey found no black actor as a permanent member of a repertory company. They may be brought in for occasional stock roles—Peter Nichol's 'The National Health' and Shelagh Delaney's 'A Taste of Honey' have kept a few black actors working for years.

But so far the principle of integrated casting has made no headway in the regions. The major subsidised theatres—the National and Royal Shakespeare Company—have had black company members, but not in major roles. Even the young Theatre-in-Education teams attached to many regional theatres have a total of only three black members. These teams both play in schools and to school audiences, and it is at this level that future posibilities should be demonstrated to young people. The virtual absence of black actors in TIE work is therefore alarming. Since young black people see extremely few black professional actors (on television as well as in theatre work), it's hardly surprising either that applications to drama schools in general are extremely low. In Spring 1975 there were only 10 British-raised black drama students in eight London drama schools, which had between them a total of 675 students. This is about half the general immigrant percentage in Britain. Moreover, those ten represented almost 100% of black applicants, unlike the successful white students who were a minority of the original applicants.

There are many differing opinions and doubts about the relevance of drama school training for young black British. Some would advocate special courses for black students along the lines of Mountview Drama School's extremely popular evening classes; others would call for more flexibility within the existing structure. We believe that there is a need for Equity's Afro-Asian Artists Association to look into the situation of Afro-Asian artists in drama schools.

In the meantime the drama schools clearly provide a necessary training service—especially for future directors and to a lesser extent, stage technicians. (The latter gain their skills more through day-release schemes from theatres and the Association of British Theatre Technicians.) It is noticeable how few trained directors and SM's exist among black theatre groups, and this has much to do with the tenuous nature of the theatrical products.

Black Theatre groups are undeniably unstable. They are so for many reasons: for the lack of trained disciplined personnel mentioned above; because of the even worse employment prospects for professional jobs (relative to those for white actors) which leads them to dropping out of productions without subsidy support if a commercial stage or TV job offers itself; because of lack of either community or host-society venues.

It is the last of these that makes the appearances of the group, Temba, relatively rare. Temba, started by South African actor Alton Kumalo in 1970 is not experimental. It aims to provide actors with good substantial roles and audiences with well-made accessible plays. So far they have done work by Athol Fugard, Lewis Nkosi and Leroi Jones, and have been consistently highly praised in the press of whichever city they have visited. Their venues have been, by choice, what is termed 'middle-scale touring'—civic theatres and university theatres.

Nevertheless Temba can only get bookings outside London, and only for three months or so in the year. The reasons are, in a sense, understandable. Regional theatres have their own programmes. They have only limited time to spare for outside groups. University theatres, again, have well filled programmes and moreover are closed for a large part of the year. Nevertheless, where regional theatres are concerned, it would be desirable were they to consider West Indians in their area to be positively sought, courted and drawn in to the theatre. Not only would we like to see professional touring groups like Temba welcomed rather than simply given the leavings but we would also like to see regional theatre administrators recognise that they live in a multiracial society and reflect it in their programmes.

Directors like Vyvyan Ellacott at Ilford's new Kenneth More Theatre try consciously to involve Indians and West Indians as well as native British. But he is in a minority, and given disappointingly little help by, in particular, the local Community Relations Council. It is not an easy task to persuade minorities that the theatre can be for them too. The Arts Council 'marketing the arts' project in Bristol, Birmingham and Sheffield found problems in convincing new arts audiences of the attractiveness of the product. However, if institutions are to claim that they serve a whole community (and moreover are financed by it through the rates) then they must make efforts to match reality with the principle.

Partly, these should be through their TIE teams, who educate the audiences of the future, partly through bringing in ethnic groups, partly through mirroring society more accurately in the composition of their companies, and partly through the material that they present. No civic theatre has yet had the inspiration to present a rock-version of the Jamaican Anansi fables as their Christmas show, rather than Puss in Boots.

This is not however, the whole picture. In theatre at large there is a growing move to take productions to audiences, rather than wait for them to come to the productions. Developed most by Fringe and Community Theatre groups, it leads to shows in halls, schools, community centres, works clubs and canteens, claimants union and trades union centres. So far this tour circuit does not include minority community meeting places.

We believe that efforts should be made particularly by the regional arts associations and the Arts Council small-scale touring scheme to establish this extended tour circuit. Ultimately, we would like 'black' and 'white' circuits used by both. But in the short-term there is a great need for black communities to see their own lives reflcted on stage, often in West Indian dialect or patois. There is also a great need for work by black theatre groups to be seen by communities for whom and to whom they are frequently speaking. As things are, productions surface for a time in one place, and then sink without a trace at the end of a few weeks' run. In the past six months London has seen the Calabash Players, the L'Ouverture Theatre Company, Grasshopper Theatre, Wall Theatre, RAPP, The Theatre of Black Youth, Black Theatre of Brixton and a Keskidee production. None has had the exposure that they themselves would have found valuable and instructive. And although one should be careful that groups first have the time to find their own way of working, there undoubtedly comes a time when both they and audiences benefit by wider exposure.

Most of them are anxious to find new venues, in particular venues where they can address their own particular audiences. For though fringe theatres like the Cockpit, Roundhouse Studio, Oval House and Little Theatre are open, they on the whole attract only white audiences or the minority West Indian that is already 'converted'. Though their importance should not be underestimated it is also important that these venues be augmented.

The main problem of setting up such a community touring circuit is finance. Few of the possible venues, if indeed any, would bring in a significant financial return. It is part of their ethos not to bar people because they do not have enough money. On the other hand, if black groups are to tour what are essentially very difficult venues in theatrical terms then they must be well funded to do so. Temba, for instance, will point to the community Bubble Theatre that received £27,500 in 1974/5 from GLAA (plus a £1,500 transfer grant from the Arts Council) to take theatre out to London boroughs, and cite

that as the measure of the support needed for a black theatre. Temba has had the experience of working with a more participatory form of theatre in Liverpool's Granby Festival, and noticed that young people involved with that will follow them later to more formal venues in Liverpool like the Everyman Theatre. They would like to give a year to playing community venues, but at the same time, says Alton Kumalo, it should be realised that they would resist giving them a cut-rate version of theatre. They would want to have enough money to be able to bring in decent lighting, costumes, sound effects and technicians. With their £8,000 a year Arts Council grant that is hardly possible. The result, he says, is that 'we are constantly giving people something that we can't believe in ourselves'. There appears to be an assumption, reflected in the Arts Council's Community Arts budget of £150,000 (rather less than 1% of the total Arts Council grant-in-aid), that community arts should be low salary and low-cost. However since, where theatre groups are concerned, they are taking live entertainment to a sizeable proportion of the population who would not otherwise go to the theatre, it is surely time to think of better support.

Setting up a tour circuit of black venues will not be easy, as the experience of two groups has shown. In 1972 a group of actors set up a tour of Trevor Rhone's 'Smile Orange' (a sharp-toothed farce set in a Jamaican tourist resort that was both excellently acted and ably directed). It played for a few nights each in a series of local London town halls where—at least in Acton, where I saw it—the acoustics were abysmal, the lighting rudimentary and the atmosphere in general off-putting and bureaucratic. At each place 'Smile Orange' picked up business at the end of its short run (before the tour itself was ignominiously curtailed by fire). But the lessons to be learned were a) longer runs and b) more money for both effective pre-publicity and the production budget itself, c) more relevant and attractive venues. English host-community fringe/community groups like West London Theatre Workshop have managed to devise shows that over-ride the inherent disadvantages of town halls, but they had £12,500 in 1975/6 to do it. Obviously money is no substitute for maturity of work—work that has worked out coherently its terms of reference and found a style in which to present it effectively.

But money does give time to find that quality and it does mean that good actors are not working for less than they could otherwise command, and thereby themselves subsidising the work.

Remuneration is important in the second of the two examples—The Dark and Light company of Brixton, Britain's so far longest lasting black theatre group.

The idea of the Dark and Light was first floated by the ebullient Jamaican actor, Frank Cousins, at a press conference in 1970. By the following year a building had been found, with the help of Lambeth Borough Council.

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Longfield Hall, situated on the fringes of Brixton, was a large outdated council hall. In that year (with Arts Council support of £1,000), the first production was mounted—Athol Fugard's 'The Blood Knot', a play about the tensions between two brothers (one black, the other passing as white) in South Africa. The audience—apart from official well-wishers and friends—was predictably small: not surprising for a new venture. However, it never appreciably rose for all the theatre's three and a half years of life.

Why did it die? Frank Cousins himself, and his staunch administrator Manley Young, would have said firstly parsimony—inadequate funding by Lambeth Borough Council, the Arts Council and Community Relations Commission. Secondly they would have placed the blame at the door of the Arts Council and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation who in 1973 made grants dependent on the theatre's touring. This, Cousins feels, made the establishment of a firm local base impossible. The funding bodies, on the other hand, claim that they gave every help they could, but Longfield Hall still remained near empty. The directive to tour came because they felt Cousins could find his audiences only by going to them. As it turned out, although audiences were indeed higher, the mechanics of low-budget touring, with no finance to keep an administration going at the base, exhausted the Dark and Light.

The answer lies not in who did (or didn't) do what. It lies more in definition. Frank Cousins was being asked to do what he was never by nature equipped to do—to discover a form of theatre for non-theatre going community audiences and to popularise it locally. It was rather like asking a hare to enter a high-jump race. To be fair to the funders, however, Cousins did also voluntarily enrol himself in the race.

However, it is clear from looking at his programmes and talking to him over the years, that Cousins' first concern was professional theatre. He was highly aware of the poor deal meted out to professional black actors and wanted to give them a range of good roles to sink their dramatic teeth into; he wanted to give them a much-needed showcase. He also of course was concerned about the plight of particularly the young blacks, but he was first and foremost a professional. In a different setting he might have developed a company like New York's Negro Ensemble. In a community setting he was working bravely against the grain. The only occasions when the Dark and Light was filled to capacity were for their two pantomimes, based by Manley Young on West Indian Anansi folk tales. The first one in paticular—which placed the West Indian folk character, Anansi the Spiderman in Brixton—was the most original thing the Dark and Light ever did.

Touring was little more successful than events at the home-base. For nearly two years Cousins dragged a reluctant group of actors—reluctant, because under-paid by Equity touring rates—round the so-called black areas of Britain: Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Birmingham, Cardiff,

Southampton. The economics were tight (in 1974/5 they were given £5,000 by the Arts Council's touring department) and physical wear and tear telling. Black members of audiences frequently disliked plays. 'Raas' (a sentimental picture of a so-called archetypal West Indian family, by a white American academic) was booed off the stage in Birmingham, an audience reaction with which one can sympathise.

Meanwhile, Longfield Hall was let out—as it had been at intervals during the company's tenure—to non-black groups that were frequently mediocre and did nothing to enhance the image of the hall. There were two notable exceptions, both black groups, Jamal Ali's 'The Twisted Knot' performed by the original RAPP managed to get good audiences because of their good local contacts. But the all-out winner was an extraordinary theatrical event in 1971—a Sunday night performance by a Lewisham social action group, the Fasimbas. The hall for that was completely packed, down to standing at the side and back. Fifty people were turned away for lack of space.

I have rarely been present at a more exciting occasion. The audience was very mixed age-wise—parents and aunties were there in force—and at first a bit restive during an exposition of the facts of slavery. But then the group got into the meat of the show—a series of witty, affectionate, factually-based sketches: back in the Caribbean being conned with visions of golden streeted England, goggle-eyed on arrival in London, being conned with visions of an exploited minister in a Pentecostal Church (shrieks at this from the audience, eyes streaming, thighs slapped—'Oh Lord'—till the cast could barely continue). Then a family scene showing parents much disturbed by their children's political involvement. The youngsters explain why it is a necessary commitment. The parents listened. Not only the parents on stage, but the whole audience listened attentively to the arguments. Maybe with some it was the first time that they had heard their consternation expressed and dealt with respectfully. You could have heard a pin drop.

The play itself was roughly acted; direction was unsophisticated. But it made for a stunning evening that could not fail to have impressed everyone there. The contrast between that and the Dark and Light productions could not have been more marked.

The reasons are not hard to find. The Fasimbas were all known in their community. They had a following ranging from political confreres to parents, relatives and family friends. They were also very aware of the issues of the black working class situation, involved as they were in Saturday Schools, truancy programmes and other forms of community action. But they had also had the vision to present them in a form that was accessible, vivid and immensely funny, without dodging the issue at all. The Fasimbas knew what they wanted, who their audience was, and how to speak to it. The Dark and Light—for all its undoubted labour never worked that one out.

There are clear lessons here for both funders and theatre groups. Definition is of paramount importance for both—definition of aims, of audiences, of style, of place. What seems needed is a far wider consultative process by funding bodies, so as to forestall confusion—for a start more representatives with specialised experience co-opted to relevant Arts Council committees.

However even were that to happen, we would still be left with the situation Cousins did something to redress—the chronic underemployment of black actors.

The idea of a black theatre company has been floated frequently. The reasons for it have grown out of the situation already described here—lack of opportunities for actors within the existing structure and hence lack of experience to develop their craft. But there has also been a rising awareness—demonstrated by two recent schemes put forward by the organisations Drum and Black Theatre Workshop—of wider community needs. Both these schemes see training schemes for youngsters and tours in schools, particularly, as a prerequisite. 'Drum' says the organisation's policy document, 'sees itself as having the following functions:

i) co-ordinative
ii) educative
iii) acting as a catalyst
iv) providing a platform. The form that it is hoped will encompass all these activities is a large central London black arts centre with theatre, arts gallery, concerts, poetry readings, films, lectures, workshops, and audio-visual facilities'.

Black Theatre Workshop concentrates more on theatre specifically. Its broad objectives are four-fold:

1 To establish a permanent base for black drama (and other professional artistic activities);

2 to establish a theatre workshop which will regularly present the work of black writers, musicians and choreographers;

3 to provide intensive training for black actors thereby promoting wider recognition of their calibre;

4 to develop a close relationship between the theatre workshop and the black community in the United Kingdom; to provide a national stimulus for the development of a new cultural awareness and a positive self-image amongst young black people; to make available to them related educational and training programmes'.

There are, however, many arguments put forward by critics of the proposals against the establishment of, in particular, a black theatre.

The main one is that it ignores the real issue—the necessity to integrate black creative and performing artists into the existing structures from drama schools to national companies.

Vital though it is, there are problems. Equity's 1974 Report on Afro-Asians employed by television said that 'directors in television and the theatre have frequently pointed out that coloured artists in the main do not reach the required standards'. Although there are many extremely proficient black actors (such as Mona Hammond, Stefan Kalipha, Derek Griffiths, Norman Beaton, Carmen Munro to name only a handful), it is true that many others go into profession sideways. They start as extras or small part players in films or television, and do not go through either three years of drama school or the subsequent repertory theatre training. What they badly need is experience in a range of roles, from major in one production to walk-on parts in the next, from Shakespeare to Leroi Jones, from classics to experimental. Without formal training and without either that exposure or experience, it is unlikely that they will be picked up by the national companies or repertory companies.

The professional theatre in Britain is characterised by caution. It jibs at the idea of integrated casting (i.e. casting black actors for roles that are not especially written for blacks) and hedges its bets by saying that black actors are anyhow not good enough. It may be that over the next decade a few actors will be drawn into companies. But what of the rest, left to stagnate in a pool of disregard? And what of the next generation of black actors who will, seeing the lack of opportunities, undoubtedly dwindle?

There is a clear case for the creation of a black theatre company and training workshops. It would

a) provide experience and a platform for existing actors

b) demonstrate to theatre administrators that black actors have calibre and ability

c) be capable of staging plays by international black writers, amongst other work

d) tour to schools and community venues, showing both black and white audiences that theatre is not an all-white occupation

e) set up courses for youngsters, youth leaders, teachers and all interested parties in all aspects of stagecraft

f) provide a base for workshops by visiting artists such as Robert Serumaga. We would see its role as both providing opportunities (lacking at present and unlikely to occur in the foreseeable future) and generating activity nationally. As far as wider horizons are concerned, we would like to see the British Council promoting overseas tours of black British artistic activity, as they do

with host-society work. There could surely be few better advertisements abroad of a multiracial/multicultural state.

4 Fine Arts, Literature and the Printed Word

In 1974 the United Kingdom African Festival Committee—whose job it was to organise the black British contribution to the since postponed Lagos Festival—began to plan an exhibition of local artists. It ended unhappily, when UKAFC failed to find any London gallery interested in mounting the show. Although excuses can be found—that for instance the Serpentine Gallery's programme had been determined long before they were approached—it is undoubtedly true that ethnic minority artists in general have more than usual difficulty in displaying their work. The stand-by is the Commonwealth Institute. Occasionally the Whitechapel Gallery in East London and the Camden Institute mount work. Huddersfield had an exhibition of the Indian painter, Shanti Dutta's work during the 1975 Kirklees Festival.

No gallery manager, commercial or state subsidised, would naturally admit to discrimination. However the climate is such that certainly black painters in particular are diffident about approaching them. The result is a number of self-help operations. Richie Riley and Syd Gellineau show under the friendly auspices of the West Indian Students Centre. Riley also takes his canvases round any West Indian functions going. Roy Caboo has shown his work at Keskidee, the large black centre in North London. Emanuel Jegede's fine sculpture has had exhibitions at Keskidee (where he works) and Manchester's West Indian Centre. A two-week exhibition under London's Westway in 1975, organised by Caribbean Cultural International, showed paintings by Caboo, Errol Lloyd, Ralph Webster, Ronald Williams, Andre Reid, Boysie Lawrence and Lena Charles. Most of these names will be unfamiliar to the general reader, since the painters and sculptors have been little seen outside black ambiances.

Exposure is as necessary to the visual artist as it is to actor or dancer—for his own development as well as more commercial reasons. There are excellent reasons for showing in black venues—an interview with Roy Caboo in the February 1975 issues of the 'Race Today' expressed them strongly. However, as with any other arts the opportunities should exist for them to move freely in society; it would be to the host-community's benefit if they did.

Many possible gallery walls, at present unused, exist. Arts Centres could, with the help of regional arts associations, mount exhibitions of local ethnic minority artists (and others). Theatres, particularly newly designed ones with generous foyer space, could stage exhibitions. Those local adult education institutes who are developing links with immigrant populations could show work also. Bradford Art Gallery, it is encouraging to note, have been given

Urban Aid support for developing an exhibitions programme that will deal with the background of its immigrant communities (though regrettable that the scheme has had to be shelved until better economic times). We would like to see other civic galleries follow suit, but deal not only with ethnic backgrounds but with the work currently being done that springs from those backgrounds.

At the same time we realise it is extremely important that work is also seen in places like Keskidee, or even informally in ad hoc situations like a disused shop in Brixton. We would like to see support given to such exhibitions by the regional arts associations and by the Arts and Leisure Departments of local authorities.

A similar problem of discrimination exists with literature and poetry. Publishing companies-cum-bookshops like Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications and New Beacon Books have done sterling work in promoting the wider circulation of ideas. They not only stock a good range of literature (from Walter Rodney to Penguin studies) for inquiring young minds, but they also publish their own studies. Bernard Coard's influential booklet on West Indian children and ESN schools came from John La Rose's New Beacon Books. Jessica Huntley and Bogle-L'Ouverture both produce and stock children's books that feature black children. Both firms are in close touch with the black community and are fulfilling a publishing need insufficiently touched by the publishing trade. We believe that they and similar firms that may emerge should be given funding for research and publication.

In 1969 I with a friend—Courtney Tulloch—started and ran a black community newspaper, The Hustler. We started it with donations totalling £120 from relatives, well-wishers and friends: printing costs of around £70 for an 8-page issue could be covered by advertisements. These palmy days are gone, starting and running a paper now would need much greater financial resources. Nevertheless in our nine months of life, run entirely by unpaid volunteers, we rose—in response to demand—to a 3,000 print order. We also discovered that we had created a much-needed platform for writers, poets and graphic artists, ranging from school children upward. That need is still there, in the Indian as well as the West Indian community.

Robert Birmingham's Black Writers Association, for instance, has held monthly workshops in which work is read by its authors and then generally discussed. The next step is clearly the ability to print and circulate work, and funding from Arts Council and regional arts associations to support that.

5 Housing the Arts

All the arts discussed—whether performing or static—need a place to be seen and in which to develop. Actors and dancers need venues, painters need studios

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and wall-space, writers need printing presses, students need space for classes, musicians need somewhere to practise or rehearse, and to store instruments like the huge steel drum kits. It has been argued that enough places exist already, some virtually unused—community centres, Fringe theatres, university and college facilities, youth clubs, self-help organisations and other established institutions such as London's West Indian Student Centre, Keskidee and Africa Centre.

However, our particular area of interest is local and grassroots. All of the venues mentioned should be certainly involved with the arts and be properly encouraged to become so. But what is also needed is a series of low-key community arts centres where the emphasis is on discovering forms relevant to the very special black experience in Britain. The accent should be more on workshop training than performance, and we would expect each one to evolve differently in response firstly to local demand and secondly, to the talents and capabilities of the people involved. Several black community centres have been funded during 1975 under the Urban Aid Programme. These have the potential to develop into small-scale workshop and training arts centres. To do so, however, some measure of help is necessary—funds for tutors, grants for exhibitions. Regional arts associations and local authorities should service them also with advice (if required) when setting up. (It is no use if having adapted your building you find you have no capacity to show films, for instance.) RAAS should also support tours of work evolved between different centres, or talks/demonstrations by outside performers.

It is at this very local level that we see most work to be done, for it is here that future audiences, artists and performers will develop. And it is also a level which can still be extremely responsive resulting, one would hope, in work that is both changing and unpredictable.

We feel very strongly that any action in the West Indian community must come at the base of the pyramid which is why we are not sympathetic at present to plans for a national centrally located multi-purpose black arts centre, like that proposed by Drum.

Such a centre would have much to commend it, including immediate psychological benefits. People from many ethnic minorities, not least West Indians, have expressed a desire for a well-endowed, splendid centre. Sharkey in Alfred Fagon's play 'Death of a Black Man' was voicing a very common reaction: 'Don't depend on the council for anything. The only help the council give black people for their art is an old church hall in Brixton called the Dark and Light Theatre, and another one at King's Cross called the Keskidee. Never go and watch black people's works of art. The buildings are so old that if the draught don't kill you, the building will collapse and kill you instead!' Such a centre would also serve to show white audiences that Britain's black population have something substantial to offer in the field of the arts.

A centre could indeed provide many advantages—it could mean that resources of teaching talent and equipment are centralised in one place for the use of all, instead of being spread more thinly over the country; it could provide central storage space for props, instruments and costumes, as well as rehearsal space for needy groups; it could—it is argued—eliminate the possibility of rival groups competing for scarce funds for similar projects.

In hard economic times, there is clearly a temptation to try and rationalise and confine expenditure. We are by no means certain that this would be the right decision though, for the following reasons.

Although it is true that West Indian audiences will turn out in force for black occasions (the Harlem Dance Theatre played to standing room only), this is not always the case. The Jamaican National Dance Theatre Company played to only 29% capacity at the same theatre. With most of the minorities considered in this Report there has been a similar problem—the fact that potential audiences have been from rural backgrounds in their countries of origin, while theatre going (and related arts) are middle-class occupations. The Greek Cypriot Brotherhood for instance commented on how few Greek Cypriots turned up for the Greek National Theatre at the Aldwych. On the other hand the popular Greek group Fiorfiris touring Cypriot-strong areas does packed business. In short, audiences need to be brought to a performance experience in local terms. An arts centre in the middle of London would, it must be suspected, have little relevance for the bulk of Britain's black population. It would effectively service only London, and even there—it has been put to us—the present cost of transport would for instance make it a heavy expenditure for a family to travel from Brixton or Leytonstone.

The practicality of expecting a consistently faithful black audience is one doubt. Secondly, there is the matter of work available. A number of theatre and dance groups mentioned in this section are developing groups. They do not fall into the category of sophisticated professional work postulated by supporters of the Centre scheme. Three national theatre critics for instance preferred not to review the composite programme presented at the Roundhouse in November 1975 by the Black Theatre of Brixton. They realised quite rightly, that what was being presented was not a polished professional show, but mostly the results of a community theatre project. The most relevant work being done at the moment comes into the community category. To expose it as professional performance—though it must be stressed that this was not BTB's aim—is both wrong and potentially destructive. There is talent enough for a professional company and the need among black actors and dancers for such an experience, but that does not merit an arts centre. Nor, since a vital part of their work must be to tour, would they be able to fill a year-long programme. If a centre included (as

envisaged) a performing space it would have to be let out for much of the year. Possible alternatives suggested have been visiting dance groups like Harlem or Jamaica's NDTC. But these need the facilities of a big theatre like Sadlers Wells both for their style of shows and also for the possibility of a decent economic return. Other alternatives have been local British groups, but these are often the small-scale community groups who operate at a lower level of pressure.

We believe that there is a case for London-based institutions—for a black dance and theatre company/training schools. However we also feel that the emphasis must be on generating, helping and sustaining localised activity, and that any central institutions must be used in that context rather than as, first and foremost, showcases. We would like to see far more money put into the activities of local groups, far more encouragement by regional bodies such as regional arts associations and also by local authorities. Tentative ideas at present of siting a black dance training course in Keskidee and the West Indian Students Centre, both of which have built up local support, seems to us to be a move in the right direction. Indeed, Drum's recent work—promoting the play created and acted by the young Bristol West Indian Theatre Group, together with their own production of a Soyinka play, for schools—seems a more productive way of building a base than by bricks and mortar. We believe that both Drum's projects and Black Theatre Workshop's (neither of which are mutually exclusive) should be encouraged and adequately funded by the Arts Council.

We would not exclude the idea of a black arts centre, but it seems not a first but a second priority. We would suggest a two stage operation—firstly to consolidate activity at a local community level, as outlined. Secondly we believe that regional centres should be created, probably serving the North, Midlands, London and the South-West. These would be controlled by groups in their particular areas and would be centres for equipment such as video, print and film, and facilities like recording rooms, dark rooms et cetera. They would be more performance-based and would draw on the work being developed at a less intense level, organising for instance youth or steel band festivals, painting and sculpture exhibitions. They would host tours and workshops and also organise schools visits. It is here that we feel the idea of a black arts centre has great relevance and value—not one central London institution, however, but at least three situated strategically across the country.

West Indians

'West Indian' is a portmanteau term, covering a variety of backgrounds for Britain's 304,000 from the West Indies and New America, ranging from small

rural islands to South American mainland countries like Guyana. The arts here are similarly diverse—from traditional gospel singers to folk dance teams to experimental poetry-cum-drumming. More than other communities, there is a fair number of would-be professionals currently working in theatre, dance and music—again with varying aims, from agitprop to Black Macbeth. This being so, it is particularly important that more than the present minimal accommodation be made available for them in the professional world. Again unlike other communities, whose traditions and social cultures are more deep-rooted, the discovery of an identity via the arts is especially important to the West Indian young.

Steps needed include the support of self-help groups, the encouragement of the arts in youth clubs, schools and adult education institutes, the development of a tour circuit and the establishment of further community centres with support for arts activities, as well as the institution of touring black theatre and dance companies.

We recommend that

1 large-scale carnivals be recognised as major attractions by the RRC, local authorities, Arts Council and regional arts associations and funded accordingly; and that a closer and more regular relationship be developed between carnivals organisers and funders, particularly in relation to support for the pre-carnival planning months.

2 spin-off arts activities from carnivals be encouraged and funded by local authorities; and that standard-forming competitions/festivals in carnival arts, steel band or other related musical activity be supported by the Arts Council and regional arts associations.

3 the DES and local education authorities support in-service short courses for tutors in steelband music, workshops for tutors and courses in tuning; and investigate the establishment of a standard of ability for teachers, in conjunction with education authorities, teachers and experts —but a standard that should in no way exclude or penalise teachers without formal music or teacher training.

4 the DES and local education authorities support short in-service courses for teachers and youth leaders in Afro-Caribbean arts, and teacher-training colleges include them.

5 amateur music, dance and folk festivals should take in Afro-Caribbean arts, where appropriate creating separate categories for the work.

6 youth steelbands and adult non-commercial ones be given support toward the costs of instruments and tuition by the appropriate departments of local authority.

7 youth clubs encourage existing voluntary cultural youth groups to affiliate, offering them rehearsal and storage space, and that they organise cultural exchanges between clubs as well as participation in youth festivals.

8 local education authorities compile a list of circulation amongst groups, youth clubs, adult education institutes, of teachers willing and qualified to teach dance, drama et cetera.

9 a minority arts register to be kept up to date by a new and independent agency, designed to help groups find teachers, companies find venues et cetera.

10 a tour circuit of informal theatre venues be developed by the Arts Council and regional arts associations.

11 funding be found centrally by the Arts Council and British Council for visits of overseas ensembles, and that the groups be also used in workshop situations in community centres, art centres, et cetera under the aegis of regional arts associations.

12 regional theatres, particularly their TIE teams, reflect more accurately the composition of a multiracial society in both casting and type of work mounted.

13 a national black dance company and training school broadly along the lines of GLAA's feasibility study, be established, with a brief to tour.

14 a national black theatre company and training school be established with the objects of—

i) giving black, professional actors much needed experience in repertory
ii) providing them with a showcase
iii) giving training to would-be actors in stagecraft and acting
iv) providing amateur evening classes
v) touring schools and community centres as well as more formal venues
vi) organising courses for youth club and community workers
vii) sending directors etc. to work with local groups
viii) ultimately organising a black national theatre festival.

15 local authorities encourage plans for community centres through the Urban Aid Programme, if necessary accepting the 25% contribution from the community.

16 in the second stage of five to seven years, a series of regional Afro-Caribbean centres be established and funded for capital and running costs by variously the Home Office, RRC, metropolitan county authorities, Arts Council and regional arts associations. Their function should be to act as a showcase for work developed in community centres, a resources and advice centre for the region, and a base for tours.

Chapter Nine: Conclusions and General Recommendations

1 Conclusions

There have been two main areas to this study. One is the nature of the cultures developed and supported by particular communities. The other is the extent to which the host-community is aware of, supports and offers facilities to ethnic minority cultural activities.

Under the first head, the resilience and extent of cultural activities has been frankly suprising. The assumption generally made has been that over a space of years original cultures will lose their importance and relevance. It is hence useful to have looked at Polish and Ukrainian immigrations who are now entering into their third generation. Although the support amongst young people is by no means one hundred percent, it is still sizeable enough to ensure the life of at least fifty dance groups and six choirs. There is no reason to expect other later immigrations to be less tenacious in their allegiance to their own cultures. Non-Europeans indeed have an added incentive to preserve them. For they provide a positive side to a disadvantaged situation, as well as a potential and frequently necessary source of personal strength.

The arts have always been humanising factors, offering an understanding of people. They are specifically a potent counterweight to the common stereotyping of different races.

For the latter reason alone one would expect to find them welcomed and well-supported by the host-community. This is not the case. Taken overall, ethnic minority arts have remained hole and corner affairs. They are less well-subsidised than comparable native-British arts. In the professional field they have far fewer outlets in dance and drama, leading naturally to a very low level of applications to training schools.

The one positive element is in the education system, as mentioned in the Introduction. The London Borough of Brent, for instance, has recently appointed four cultural liaison teachers. Via its schools, it supports two steel bands, international evenings, a sitar class, an Indian dance class and a class in 'West Indian rhythm dancing'. 'All authority youth clubs,' the Borough says in its reply, 'have a West Indian band of some kind, involving steel or guitars or drums.' Waltham Forest has several ethnic groups affiliated to its youth clubs—notably the well-known Leyton Youth Steel band and Cypriot Club dance group. Birmingham schools have a Punjabi bhangra dance group, Asian dance group, West Indian Gospel Flame Singers and two multicultural

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weeks. Manchester Education Authority has appointed an Ethnic Music Advisor to schools. However a lot of cultural activity is still outside school hours, and could valuably be drawn into the curriculum to become less of a minority activity. Particularly fruitful projects could be far more widely publicised, in order to suggest examples to authorities who have not as yet investigated the possibilities of their own minorities' arts.

In a slow and piecemeal way, schools are now gradually beginning to educate their pupils in the arts of a multiracial society. Far more could be done by the DES, particularly in the provision of training schemes and publicity in general. The area as a whole would merit a report or policy document.

However any arts schoolchildren may have learnt are not followed up after they leave school. Should they *want* to follow up interests, it would be difficult to do so, doubtless leading to the suspicion that the tolerant multiracial society presented to them at (some) schools is not matched by the outside world. Voluntary-run adult classes in ethnic arts are largely unfunded and both they and performing groups are consequently pretty unstable. Cultural groups find it hard to get premises and perform usually only at rather private functions of the particular minority.

The same neglect is noticeable in the broadcasting media, where again the tastes of ethnic minorities as both arts consumers and producers are rarely accommodated. Again the emphasis is on immigration as a 'problem' and as sociological fodder. Where are the programmes that show the thriving growth of steel band music, of Indian classical music and dance, of the many religious and folk dance occasions important to the Indian community or the annual get-togethers of the very many Serbian, Ukrainian and Polish dance groups in this country? Producers will talk about proportionate importance and the fact that only 2.5% of the adult working population is non-British (a statistic that omits the British born young). However, in the cases where ethnic arts have been able to achieve some measure of stability and find a wider platform, interest has always been found among the native-British. Even the BBC's Asian-language programme, Nai Zindagi Naya Jeevan, gets letters from non-Asian viewers who enjoy the music and dance. It is easy to monitor the obvious. What neither BBC nor independent broadcasting companies have done is to seek out the entertainment patronised by Britain's minorities—extremely underpublicised because of lack of outlets and funds—and recognise the entertainment-value it could have for society at large.

The advantages, were they to do this, are great. Not only would the host-society be given a justly positive view of minorities, but minorities would see themselves accepted for activities that are of value to them.

The fact that broadcasting has not embraced the multiracial arts points again to their position as a silent sub-culture within British society. In order

to bring them out, the agencies of many different bodies are needed—government departments such as the DES and the Home Office, through its Urban Aid Programme, to provide capital for buildings, where necessary, and training schemes; the Arts Council, particularly through its Community Arts Committee and touring department; local district, borough and county authorities through locating, encouraging and funding local groups and providing outlets for work; regional arts associations both to support and provide possibilities of interchange, the new Race Relations Commission and local community relations councils to create situations, by funding and liaison-work whereby the possible contribution of ethnic arts to the mainstream is brought out; the media to present the activities of the minorities nationally and also not simply in either early-morning immigrant language programmes or late-night access slots; for major subsidised companies like the National Theatre and the chain of repertory theatres to present work by ethnic minority writers and use actors of Afro-Asian and Chinese origin.

The root cause of the low level ethnic arts support is the lack of effective contact between new-British and native-British. This has been evidenced partly during research for this study, and has been largely borne out by the replies received from local authorities. Frequently they have said briefly that no applications have been made for assistance and therefore no grants have been made. There is surely no cause and effect between these two statements. They might as well say that no old people have applied for winter clothing allowances, therefore they have made no allocations. If no applications are made this is a cause for concern, a sure sign that something in the structure is wrong, and not at all necessarily a sign that there is no demand or need for services.

Compounding this lack of knowledge is a fear that assisting ethnic minority arts might constitute reverse racism. Understandable though it is, it is still a false fear. In very broad terms, the aim of arts patronage is to allow people to develop their own voices and modes of expression. The fact that a certain percentage of new Britons do so through different forms from the standard native-British ones should make little difference, nor does it necessarily mean that those forms are exclusive to ethnic minorities. There are, for instance, many racially mixed steel bands and also Indian classical dance classes. Nevertheless, not only local authorities but also other institutions expressed nervousness at considering ethnic arts as a separate form of activity. The British Federation of Music Festivals (who also deal with amateur speech, drama and dance) have twice rejected establishing a separate competitive class for ethnic minority arts. And although a few steel bands have found their way into the Mixed Ensemble class of some local festivals under the Federation's wing, no exposure for instance has been given to Indian music and dance groups.

Obviously sitarists could be drawn into the String Class, but then you come across two stumbling-blocks. Firstly they require knowledgeable adjudication. And secondly, how can you judge between a violin solo and a sitar 'alap'? The experience of the Federation also re-inforced the impression of the low visibility of ethnic arts. The organisation would in principle be delighted to include them, but have had little success in locating groups and individual performers. Attempts via local community relations officers drew a blank.

In all, the state of ethnic minority cultural activities is one of muddle, confusion, misconception and lack of imagination. Since funding bodies take the line that they only respond to approaches, the consequent funding has been haphazard and operating without a context. That has also had the effect of not spreading widely the knowledge of their own existence. We feel that arts structures in general could have done far more to publicise their own functions, particularly in the minority press, on local radio in such programmes as Black Londoners, and on BBC TV's Asian programme.

So what is to be done about this situation? Easy answers would involve the creation of new structures, Ethnic Arts Boards and full-time officers. One could, with great facility, draw up an impressive-looking system designed to have a decreasing chain of command from central offices to local bases. It would, however, be little more than pie in the sky. And although acceptable to some, would in no way tackle the real problem. It would moreover serve only to establish an alternative body—a sort of parallel black Arts Council—and perpetuate the myth that ethnic arts are some special activity for ethnic minorities alone.

The only separate body that should urgently be set up is a publicising, linking and advisory agency. This should be a small-staffed unit with the job of a) putting groups in touch with each other, helping them find eg teachers, directors or personnel needed, and advising them on sources of funding, b) informing funding bodies, from local authorities to national bodies, of what exists, what its needs are and where to contact people. Thirdly, we see it as a highly necessary adjunct to this Report, so that its findings and recommendations are not, as is always the danger with reports, shelved. In practical terms, the need for such an agency has been demonstrated through the many queries that have come to me, as Organising Consultant for this Report, in the absence of any other body.

The second need is for some rationalisation in the actions of existing arts funding bodies. So far little differentiation has been made by them of the varying nature and function of ethnic arts. However, as will have become clear in the body of the Report, there are considerable differences even within a community. Firstly, there are the large-scale exercises designed to carry the culture of a minority to the majority community—such as the West Indian carnivals, developing steel band festivals and the Polish commemoration of

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the Battle of Monte Cassino. These should emphatically not be considered as minority but majority activities and should be funded by the Race Relations Commission, county authority or metropolitan county (in whichever they take place), Arts Council and regional arts association. We find the GLC judgement, for instance, that the massive Notting Hill Carnival is not of regional significance, and therefore not fundable, extraordinary.

The arts funding of the Community Relations Commission has been valuable in so far as several needy groups have had support. However, we feel that some redefinition of its role should come with its translatioan into the Race Relations Commission. Although there appear to be some doubts whether the new RRC will have any arts funding capacity at all, we believe that it is not only well within their brief but a very necessary extension of their work to 'encourage harmonious race relations'. Much of the work hitherto funding, has been of a small-scale local level and should, by rights, have been the responsibility of the relevant local authority. Such applications we would like to see the RRC pass on, either directly or through its community relations councils, to local authorities, with strong recommendations for their support. But where large-scale activities are concerned, like the examples mentioned, we believe the new RRC should be a generous funder.

Local community relations officers have, with a few exceptions, shown little interest in ethnic arts. This is not totally surprising since that is not a major priority in the reasons for their appointment. However, they do have an important part to play in pressing for the encouragement of ethnic minority arts in their regions: with local authority, regional arts associations, arts centres, galleries, civic theatres and local festivals and competitions of music, drama and dance. In order to help them be as effective as they could (and should) be, we suggest that the RRC, in conjunction with the Arts Council, runs an in-service course for cro's on both the arts themselves and arts funding.

As far as the Arts Council itself is concerned, it has been proposed to us at intervals that it should add an Ethnic Arts Committee to its list of voluntary advisors.

This we have resisted, since it seems to us to be based essentially on an illusion: that all ethnic minority arts have a common denominator. In fact Indian classical music, for instance, has little (if anything) in common with a mask-making project in a community centre. The ethnic minority arts could perfectly adequately be catered for within existing Arts Council departments—music, drama, touring, young people's theatre, literature, community arts committee, the regional department and housing the arts in particular. Each could very properly cast its net wider. The literature panel could for instance support small presses, creative magazines and poetry workshops that encompass ethnic writing; the Music Panel could encourage recitals of more specialist Indian instruments such as the veena or indeed vocal music, as well as ethnic

dance. Young People's Theatre could take in the Polish children's theatre groups. What will clearly be necessary is the co-option of experienced advisors. We suggest that advisors experienced in ethnic arts be not only co-opted onto departmental committees, but that they also be formed into a general steering committee for ethnic arts. This would have no funding capacity. Its function would be to direct applications from ethnic arts to the most relevant committee, preventing such anomalies as all ethnic arts, for instance, being automatically considered community arts. The Arts Council could very usefully extend the short 'servicing' courses they already run for their 'clients': administration and simple accounting are particularly valuable; a course in organising a tour would be extremely worthwhile. It should also be noted that some organisations like the Africa Centre expressed themselves willing to take on (subsidised) trainees to learn about arts administration. This idea has similarities with Liverpool's placing of young people in apprentice situations in theatres, and could be followed up as an idea by both the Arts Council and regional arts associations.

However, much of the existing work is of local community significance, though little funded by either local authority or regional arts association. We believe that both should shoulder the responsibility for their areas' ethnic arts in a far more wholehearted way that they have hitherto. The proper organ in local authority is the arts and leisure department (where such exists). Each such department's committees should co-opt members of minority communities onto them and they should certainly increase their budgets to cope with an at present unrecognised demand. Many authorities use local groups in annual festivals, but make no acknowledgement of their existence during the rest of the year. We find it admirable that Derby, for instance, through the local cre, give exposure to local groups in international festivals, but a pity that none get any support (beyond £80 to the Polish Saturday School) to continue and develop their work. Picking up cheap work once a year is not far from exploitation. We believe local authorities could do even more than giving financial help. They could also use groups in for instance, schools, youth clubs and community centres.

Regional arts associations have even more of a possible promotional role. Here again the possibilities are barely tapped. RAAs can do more than support and encourage local work. They can also promote the introduction of work from other regions. This, in the area of ethnic arts, is vitally important, particularly for communities like the Ukrainians who are now beginning to be more dispersed (and for different reasons, for the West Indians).

To put it concisely, two main areas need to be attended to: firstly existing bodies need to grasp their responsibilities to the arts of the new-British more firmly; secondly links need to be created that will foster the healthy development of those arts.

The agency recommended will deal partly with that second area. But it must be backed up and complemented by the work of other organisations, from the government downward. We have been particularly sad, despite having written twice to Labour Party study group on the arts offering the experience of the Report, to have had as yet no reply from them. It is to be hoped that the Helsinki Agreement of last August, signed by this government, and committing it to the encouragement of ethnic minority culture will at some point be considered by the Parliamentary Labour Party. On the other hand, we were impressed at the swift response of the Conservative Party's arts policy group who invited us to talk to them about the needs of ethnic minority arts.

As far as government-funded bodies are concerned, we believe that the Arts Council should help set up the agency and also a small-scale touring scheme, on the lines of the ground already broken by Fringe theatre and community groups. This should take ethnic arts to primarily ethnic venues, but also native ones. We note, with sympathy, the circuit that the Greater London Arts Association is currently planning of community venues for dance, and are particularly pleased that they have provisionally included an African and Indian dance group. This project could very well be developed by other regional arts associations, with the backing of the Arts Council, and extended into other forms and venues. We would in fact see an important function of a community arts officer to an RAA as the responsibility for setting up grassroots tours within his or her areas of either professional or semi-professional ethnic minority groups.

Other organisations could be similarly stretched to provide both platforms for work and possible links. The Crafts Advisory Committee's interpretation of its remit is to sponsor the development rather than the preservation of traditional arts. Within that brief they could for example, interest themselves in Asian crafts like embroidery and puppetry. It is also possible that native-British artists be placed for a time with an ethnic craftsman and gain new stimulus for his/her own work. The CAC could also sponsor ethnic crafts exhibitions.

The National Federation of Music Societies does not at present take in any of the Asian music groups or West Indian choirs that exist. The British Federation of Music Festivals (as earlier stated) has rejected suggestions that the dance, drama and music festivals affiliated to them might be advised to institute 'ethnic sections'. Youth and Music concentrates on Western music and could encourage the attendance of young people at performances of music in other traditions. The National Association of Boys Clubs and the National Association of Youth Clubs could develop courses in ethnic cultural art forms. The London Poetry Secretariat has two poets of 'ethnic' origin on its books—Jamal Ali and Cecil Rajendra. We would like to see that number expanded. Moreover, we would like to see the LPS and the National Poetry

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Secretariat support poets, such as Urdu writers, who do not work in English.

External as well as internal links are important. The British Council is responsible for assisting and helping to organise certain foreign tours by British artists. They have now ventured into the world of Fringe theatre; similar occasional incursions into ethnic minority arts would demonstrate to foreign audiences that Britain is not only a multiracial state, but proud of the benefits that that situation brings.

Tours to this country from abroad are as important as tours from it. The effect of new work from their countries of origin on groups settled here is invaluable, as is the activity-generating function of the appearance of, for instance, black music, dance and drama. Such tours are also valuable for the community at large. Ravi Shankar in his 'My Music, My Life' writes convincingly of the stimulating effect of the 1963 Edinburgh Festival, a watershed in his opinion, with its concentration on the Indian arts. It served to create new general interest, generate demand and provide some form of reference for considering the work. No-one at present seems able to help artists from abroad to visit this country. This must be changed. As well as formal tours, we believe that some system should be devised whereby visiting artists are used in training/workshop situations with related groups: that, for instance, Robert Serumaga have a series of workshops for interested groups of all races, from young people to professionals, that a visiting Indian classical dancer has either some involvement with an existing dance class or gives a short course to increase the repertoire of teachers, that Polish folk dancers work with Polish dance groups here. We also believe in the immense value of bursaries for foreign artists to work in this country with groups and classes.

Much of the success of such a scheme would depend on minority groups' own ability to organise and cohere. Two of our Recommendations have been designed directly to encourage such a development. One is the establishment of an Indian classical music and dance centre. The other is the institution of an, initially, Asian folk centre (but one that we would hope eventially take in all forms of folk art in this country, from Chinese folk song to Ukrainian dance, from English folk-song to morris dancing).

We have also recommended continued and increased support for ethnic community centres. This is in keeping with the Helsinki Agreement already referred to (Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. HMSO. Cmnd 6198), in which the signatory States undertook 'to seek to develop the necessary conditions for migrant workers and their families to preserve their links with their national culture, and also to adapt themselves to their new cultural environment'. Under the heading, 'National minorities or regional cultures', the document states that 'the participatory States, recognising the contribution that national minorities or regional cultures can make to co-operation among them in various fields of culture, intend, when such

minorities or cultures exist within their territory, to facilitate this contribution, taking into account the legitimate interests of their members.'

The value of community centres is that they provide a bridge for a community between the original country/culture and the present society.

Their function can be expected however to change in response to the situation of the minority in society at large. The Chinese Centre, for instance, in Jamaica was a bastion for Chinese culture when it was first built. It has now taken on a wider role within Jamaican society. At present, in this country, community centres are places where the arts can fulfil a community-binding function and also develop.

However looking one step ahead, we also see the need for a second tier of organisation. Community centres, even though theoretically open to all, are private and limited in their membership. We would like to see ethnic community centres, as well as other self-help ethnic minority centres and voluntary organisations, move toward the establishment of a number of regional Asian and black centres. Their job would be to act as a showcase for the best work developed within the communities, be a base for touring groups and a resources and advice source for the region. We believe that they should be controlled by the groups in their areas who should be centrally involved in their institution. This should be an essential role for regional arts association community arts officers working with fully representative specialist committees to advise them.

Ethnic minority arts have a vast amount to give to the general cultural life of this country. Not only can they provide the 'colour' modestly claimed by the Director of the Ukrainian Association, but also new cultural forms and—in the case of folk art—a refreshing link with a rural tradition. For members of the minorities themselves, their cultural traditions represent their own identity. Support for them by British institutions is firstly sensible: it makes for an easier transition, paticularly for those young people who feel they are not wholly British, to a new society. Secondly, it is socially just, since it recognises the fact that a section of British citizens now have different traditions, needs and tastes from the hitherto accepted norms. Thirdly, support for ethnic minority arts demonstrates a, belated, form of respect.

Clearly, the current economic climate militates against expenditure. The Recommendations as a whole try to stretch and use existing institutions: particularly local authorities and regional arts associations. We have every sympathy with their present predicament in which needs outrun funds on every level and, although the Recommendations lay out what we consider the ideal picture, accept that implementation would have to be phased. In order to help these bodies, we suggest that they be able to apply for financial help from the Home Office under Section 11. Several of the Recommendations, however, involve relatively small resources—for instance help with

transport costs of performing youth groups or funds for musical instruments. Others have no immediate revenue implications—such as the co-option of members of minority communities onto arts committees or the publicising of their own existence by grant-aiding bodies. Others, like organising performances of local amateur groups in schools, involve initiative and imagination more than money. We would like to stress that the Recommendations—particularly where they touch local authority—represent the ideal situation throughout the country. A few authorities may well find that they already meet many of them. Replies from local authority overall, however, indicate that they cannot be many.

II General Recommendations

In order to promote the continuation and development of ethnic minority arts, undertaken in the 1975 Helsinki Agreement—and which constitutes in our eyes, both a just contribution to the lives of our citizens from different origins and an extension of the mainstream cultural life—we recommend that the following steps be taken.

That the

HOME OFFICE

1 continue and expand its Urban Programme to give further support to minority small-scale community centres, and institute a system of co-operation between local authorities over Urban Aid application between whom a minority might happen to be geographically split.

2 in the next five to seven years, through an enlarged and extended Urban Programme, should fund the establishment of larger-scale ethnic regional centres, designed to act as showcases for local work, resources centres and bases for touring.

3 consider amending Section 11 to help both regional arts associations and local authority make provision at present lacking for ethnic minority arts and hard for them to implement in a no-growth situation.

DES

1 sponsors short in-service courses for teachers in ethnic minority arts and crafts in general, in particular in steelband music, in tuning the instruments, Afro-Caribbean and Indian dance.

2 institutes and maintains a list of professional artists willing to do performances and workshops in schools, youth clubs, community centres and Adult Education Institutes and circulates it among all education authorities; or that, alternatively it commissions an independent body, such as the recommended Minority Arts Agency in conjunction with the Association of Community Artists, to undertake the work.

3 funds the training aspects of a cultural institute for Indian classical music and dance—in conjunction with private funding—whose function shall

partly be to provide teachers for the educational demand and organise in-service courses.

4 funds—in conjunction with private funding—the training aspects of a central folk arts institute, initially for Asian folk arts but eventually as a base for the interchange of all folk arts, taking in costume making, papier mâché, puppetry, instrument-making, dance, music, song and tape-recordings of forms still existing.

5 funds the training aspects of a black theatre company (see Arts Council/7) and black dance company (Arts Council/8), in conjunction with ILEA.

ILEA

1 in conjunction with the DES, supports the training aspects of a black theatre company (Arts Council/7), black dance company (Arts Council/8), centre for Indian classical music and dance (Arts Council/12) and Asian folk institute (DES/4), when schemes with sufficient community support and expertise evolve.

(See also Local Authority, Section II.)

ARTS COUNCIL

1 co-opt members of ethnic minority communities both as voluntary advisers on committees to ensure knowledge of, and informed assessment of, ethnic minority cultural activities in the fields of music, literature, art, drama, dance, community arts and young peoples theatre, and as a general steering committee to give expert advice to ensure that applications are correctly directed to the most relevant departments.

2 develop through its Touring Department, in conjunction with regional arts associations, a tour circuit of less formal venues for dance and theatrical events likely to be relevant to ethnic minority communities as well as the host-community.

3 fund theatre work for children in languages other than English.

4 in conjunction with the British Council and any other interested bodies it sponsor the visits here of foreign ensembles who could both broaden the general knowledge of different traditions and encourage work in this country from a similar background to develop.

5 supports, through its Community Arts Committee, the placing of artists from foreign ensembles with local groups working in a similar tradition for workshops or courses.

6 support through its Community Arts Committee events such as steel

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band music festivals and young Asian music, song and dance festivals.

7 fund the establishment and running of a black theatre company and training school that will a) provide experience and opportunities at present lacking for black professional actors b) train interested young people with either amateur or professional aims c) run short courses for people working with community groups and needing more technical expertise or artistic stimulation d) tour to schools, civic theatres, arts centres and community venues.

8 fund the establishment and running of a black dance company and training school broadly working towards the lines of the Greater London Arts Association's feasibility study of such a scheme.

9 directly promote events like touring exhibitions that show the contribution to be made by artists working in Britain in different traditions.

10 sponsor and fund poetry and literature workshops and the small presses to print it.

11 encourage through its literature department the translation of poetry and prose written in languages other than English by members of British minority communities.

12 fund the establishment, through Housing the Arts and as a second-stage development, of a central institute of Indian classical music and dance that would a) train students, b) serve as a source of teachers for schools, youth clubs, etc, c) provide a base for visiting musicians to give recitals and/or workshops, d) provide continuity and a standard of performance and instruction.

13 fund the establishment, through Housing the Arts and as a second-stage development, of a central folk arts institute (DES/4) and regional ethnic arts centres (Home Office/2) that will provide a focus for initially Asian folk arts but ultimately all British ethnic minority folk arts.

BRITISH COUNCIL

1 promote overseas tours of ethnic minority drama, music and dance groups as well as work from the host-community.

2 in conjunction with the Arts Council and other interested bodies, sponsor the visits of foreign ensembles and performers to Britain that have direct relevance to the work of British ethnic minority groups and that can both stimulate them and increase general knowledge of the background to their work.

RACE RELATIONS COMMISSION

1 fund large-scale events in the nature of Chinese New Year and Notting Hill's West Indian Carnival, that serve to carry minority cultural traditions to the host-community.

2 either directly or through the local community relations councils pass on applications, with strong recommendations for their consideration, from smaller groups, to the relevant local authorities and/or regional arts associations.

3 contribute to the funding for institutes such as an Asian folk arts centre (DES/4), Indian music and dance centre (Arts Council/12), black theatre company (Arts Council/7), black dance company (Arts Council/8) and regional ethnic arts centres that serve to give wider circulation to ethnic minority cultural achievements.

4 commission a study of the needs of the Chinese communities in this country, as an extension to the ACE study 'Chinese Children'.

5 publicise the facilities for ethnic minorities particularly Urban Aid, to Chinese communities.

6 organise in-service courses for community relations officers or members of staff on ethnic minority arts and the arts-funding structure of Britain at large.

7 in conjunction with the Arts Council (Arts Council/9) fund exhibitions and events that directly demonstrate the actual and potential contribution of ethnic minority arts.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCILS

1 inform regional arts associations, local authority arts and education departments, arts centres, theatres, festivals and competitions organisers of minority arts in their areas.

2 advise local groups on the existence of the above as funding and/or promotional bodies, as well as the possible benefits of liaison with national federations.

REGIONAL ARTS ASSOCIATIONS

1 appoint a community arts officer whose brief will be to contact, promote, advise and support all community groups, including ethnic minorities in his/her area.

2 co-opt members of ethnic minorities in an advisory capacity.

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3 develop tour circuits of community venues, as well as more formal ones, for ethnic minority work from both their area and from outside.

4 subsidise any arts workshops held in their area by a member or members of a visiting foreign ensemble (Arts Council/5).

5 develop and subsidise short training courses on the pattern of present Arts Council ones in administration, accountancy, organising exhibitions and tours.

6 give more adequate support to large ethnic-based events such as festivals, in their areas, as well as the costs of preliminary administration, and that through the community arts section suggested they help stimulate spin-off activities like festivals arts workshops.

7 support regional standard-forming events, such as Steelband and Indian folk dance festivals, in their area.

GREATER LONDON COUNCIL

1 support the performance aspects of a folk arts centre (DES/4), Indian classical music and dance centre (Arts Council/12), black theatre company (Arts Council/7) and dance company (Arts Council/8).

2 fund large-scale ethnic based activities, such as Notting Hill's West Indian Carnival and the Chinese New Year, that have proven regional significance.

SCHOOLS COUNCIL

1 expand its present project (organised in conjunction with the National Foundation for Educational Research) on Education for a Multiracial Society to inclide ethnic minority arts and crafts, and encourage schools to include them as part of the curriculum.

LOCAL AUTHORITY

I General

1 continue the development of ethnic minority community centres; and where straitened circumstances argue against using the Urban Aid Programme, accept the 25% contribution made by local authority, from the community in question.

2 it liaises with other local authorities amongst whom a particular minority community might be geographically divided for a common application, where needed, under the Urban Programme, for projects connected with that minority.

II Via its education, youth and community and adult education services:

1 publicise activities and experience of schools, youth clubs and adult education institutes in establishing ethnic minority arts and crafts, as well as other schemes such as Greater Manchester's Ethnic Music post.

2 encourage local teacher-training colleges to provide courses, particularly for dance and drama students, in ethnic minority arts and crafts, as well as in-service courses in them for teachers.

3 provide tuition fees for ethnically-based music, dance, crafts and language classes established by voluntary self-help groups, where there is a proven demand for the activity, and advise them on premises.

4 compile a list of the skills and interest of teachers which could be made available to youth clubs, adult education institutes and community centres.

5 encourage performances in schools by local ethnically-based performance groups.

6 encourage, and aid financially, interchanges between youth clubs designed to demonstrate cultural work.

7 liaise with regional arts associations over the use of youth clubs, community centres and adult education institutions by touring groups.

8 encourage the development of spin-off activities from events like Caribbean carnivals in the form of participatory projects in schools, youth clubs, community arts projects or activities like related costume and mask-making workshops.

9 encourage youth clubs and adult education institutes to set up any classes that, in response to local ethnic minority demand, they feel necessary, or to sponsor existing classes established outside the orbit.

10 encourage local authority youth festival organisers to contact voluntary ethnic minority cultural groups and suggest participation.

11 encourage the employment of actors of Afro-Asian and Chinese origins in their Theatre-in-Education teams, so as to make their composition a more accurate reflection of society at large.

III Via its arts and leisure services, or locally-funded arts councils/associations:

1 co-opt members of ethnic minority groups as voluntary advisors.

2 work with community relations officers toward the participation of local groups in festivals and competitions.

3 give financial assistance to ethnically-based amateur groups towards the

cost of transport, musical instruments, costumes, materials and production costs.

4 guarantee against loss the cost of engaging professional performers by societies and associations.

5 help with the administrative costs of ethnic minority poetry and literature workshops in both English and other languages, as well as contributing to the costs of engaging poets for poetry evenings in all languages.

6 through the entertainment programmes, directly initiate and fund evenings designed to cater for the tastes of ethnic minorities, if the area has a sizeable minority proportion within its population.

7 help non-English language drama groups, that frequently constitute the only live entertainment accessible to many minorities, with production costs.

8 encourage drama groups from other local authority areas to perform, with both advice and finance.

9 assist financially large-scale events (including their administrative costs) such as Caribbean carnivals that serve to increase the participation of the host-community in minority-based events.

IV Via its libraries, arts galleries and civic theatres:

1 encourage exhibitions of ethnically-based local artists, and organise touring exhibitions of such artists.

2 liaise with local groups who might need premises but be unaware of the facilities of, in particular libraries, but also galleries and theatres (the latter on a Sunday evening).

3 encourage theatres to a) integrate their casting (ie employ actors of Afro-Asian and Chinese origin) b) cater for the tastes of local ethnic minority communities in their programmes.

RADIO AND TELEVISION MEDIA

1 via their Advisory Councils, remedy the lack of reflection in arts programmes of ethnic minority cultural achievements.

2 via local radio and television, particularly those programmes already aimed at minorities, broadcast both news of local artistic work and provide a guide to possible sources, such as regional arts associations, of sponsorship.

POETRY SECRETARIAT

1 expand their list of poets available to give readings, taking in those not writing in English.

2 publicise their availability in the ethnic minority press and local radio programmes.

3 extend their activities to include funding poetry workshops and publications that ensue.

BRITISH FEDERATION OF MUSIC FESTIVALS

1 establish separate classes for arts based on separate traditions, such as steel bands, Indian instrumental music and dance.

2 publicise the possible benefits of affiliation amongst ethnically-based voluntary groups via local authority arts departments, regional arts associations and community relations councils.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF MUSIC SOCIETIES

1 extend its activities and the services it offer to ethnic music clubs and publicise its function through local authority arts departments, regional arts associations and community relations councils.

YOUTH AND MUSIC

1 expand its programme of reduced price seats for young people to take in music outside the Western European tradition.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF YOUTH CLUBS and NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOYS CLUBS

1 institute courses in ethnic minority arts for youth leaders and youth workers.

2 encourage interchanges between youth clubs of performance groups.

3 continue and increase grants toward the purchase of musical instruments or carnival-related activities like sound-system workshops.

CRAFTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1 involve itself in schemes to preserve and develop traditional ethnic minority crafts and via publication and/or exhibition give them wider exposure.

ETHNIC MINORITY CULTURAL GROUPS and Individual Artists

1 inform regional arts associations, local authority, local broadcasting media and all other appropriate bodies, of the groups' existence and programmes.

2 where necessary combine into regional or local pressure groups to campaign for the understanding, consideration and support of ethnic minority arts, and their representation on arts committees of local authority, regional arts association and Arts Council.

3 affiliate to local authority funded arts federations, associations and, where appropriate, youth and adult education departments.

4 investigate advantages of affiliation to national bodies, such as youth and festivals organisations, covered in this Report, and the Association of the Community Artists.

5 explore the possibilities for exhibition or performance in local libraries, theatres, schools, adult education centres, community centres.

MINORITY ARTS AGENCY

1 be established as a service agency and funded by Arts Council and Race Relations Commission, so that it can

a) maintain an up-to-date register of groups and individuals.
b) advise groups on venues, grants-sources, possible personnel.
c) publicise the activities and needs of minority groups amongst local authorities, regional arts associations and all other bodies covered in these Recommendations.
d) give general advice to ethnic minorities arts groups and organisations and to individual artists.

Appendix A Method of Working/Ethnic Minority Arts

This report was begun in September 1974 as a year-long project, but was eventually extended to December 31st, 1975. Its terms of reference were to:

a) describe the actual contributions that minority arts activities are making to British society in general and minority groups in particular; to assess the potential audiences for minority arts activities, and the effects on participants;

b) review the economic aspects of these activities;

c) assess what latent artistic talents can be encouraged by an increase in resources for minority arts activities;

d) consider how an increased number of individual artists and touring companies (both British and from abroad) who are likely to have a particular appeal to cultural minority audiences, and an improved organisation of their touring programme, can better the cultural lives of both minority and majority populations.

The assumption was originally that it should cover Indians, Pakistani and West Indian communities. However, I felt strongly that ethnic minority arts in as wide a compass as possible should be looked at, that the history and situation of each had valuable lessons. The issue is not only one of colour, but of the way that society accommodates ethnic minority cultural activities at large, from Eastern Europeans to West Indians.

It was also originally suggested that I should employ a team of part-time researchers. This I rejected, firstly because of the impossibility of finding people who would make similar value-judgements in an area that is extremely emotionally fraught; secondly because the way in which communities echo each other can only be seen by an overall eye. I suspected—and indeed was proved right—that although communities had separate characters, certain themes would be duplicated. This is why, although each community section is followed by a synopsis and recommendations, overall recommendations at the end are not so divided. This Report has no Indian Policy, and so on.

The fact that I have been responsible for all the work has disadvantages partly balanced by the contributions of my excellent Consultative Committee (Taiwo Ajai, Norman Beaton, Peter Blackman, Stuart Hall, A.G.

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Hines—Chairman, till his sabbatical in July 1975—Ravi Jain, Shantu Meher and Ossie Murray). I have not for instance seen every single ethnic performance that has taken place. Usually they occur in a bunch—specifically round independence days or at weekends. And although I have at times gone from part of a Polish cultural evening say, to a Bengali dance-drama, a human being has some limitations. Nor have I been able to dig into all communities, in the time, as much as would have satisfied me.

Lines have had to be drawn. Suggestions were made, for instance, that I should take in the situation of women-artists. However, neither are women ethnic nor are they a minority. The largest minority in Britain—the Irish (710,000)—has not been dealt with. (Statistics—where they exist—for communities come from the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.) The size of the community merits a separate study and one that, in the current climate, might well be ill-received by the Irish themselves. The Jews were more of a border-line case, but again constituted, I felt, a separate situation.

One rule for a 'community' is that a group of people should consider themselves as such. Not all Jews by any means would see that as an overriding factor in their lives. Moreover Jewish sensibilities have been drawn into the mainstream of art—Rembrandt is not Jewish but Dutch, Menuhin is American, Pinter is British. This decision, I was pleased to see, was essentially endorsed by David Nathan in the Jewish Chronicle. 'Certainly, since the demise of the Yiddish theatre,' he wrote, in November, 1975, 'it is virtually impossible to identify a specifically Jewish strand in the complex weave of British culture.'

With these exceptions, priority has been given to size—not with the idea that biggest is best, but because the arts need both performers and audiences to thrive. It is also noticeable how communities with a smaller ratio of family-units have less well-established arts. The impulse frequently comes from the desire to pass one's culture on to children; and frequently the teachers have been drawn from (as in Indian dance) the community's women.

In October, 1974, I sent out a questionnaire to all 87 voluntary and local authority-supported community relations councils in Great Britain, asking for details of current cultural acticity (in youth clubs, community centres, festivals, self-help projects) and their sources of funding. I also asked for any projects that given better conditions might thrive, as well as personal comments. Between then and July 1975, I recirculated crc's twice, having initially had only twelve replies. Eventually only 19 crc's did not answer.

In July 1975, I approached regional arts associations for details of their support, if any, of ethnic minority arts. The following month, enquiries were made of all district, borough, county and metropolitan county authorities where community relations councils were located. Eighty-two replies were received out of ninety-four applications (though two were simply acknowledge-

ments and five authorities did not have the staff or time for the research necessary).

The BBC, IBA and Equity as the major professional bodies with an interest in arts and entertainment were contacted. Their evidence is to be found in Appendix C. Other sponsoring bodies—such as the British Council, National Federation of Music Festivals, National Association of Adult Institutes, National Association of Boys Clubs—have been contacted.

However, had this Report been limited to those sources alone, it would have been grievously incomplete. I felt from the beginning that it should be as much a consultative report as humanly possible. A feeling general in the West Indian community that too many reports on them had appeared without their pre-knowledge lent force to this. In all I travelled at least 2000 miles in Britain and spoke to about 300 organisations and individuals (see Appendix B). I had intended to revisit towns after the Report had been provisionally formulated in my and my Consultative Committee's minds. However that proved impossible in the alloted time. I would hope that after it is published, a series of regional conferences could be organised for all interested parties to give their reactions.

As explained in the Preface, I decided not to make this a formally-presented report. This may be seen as a point against it in the eyes of extremely pressured civil servants and local authority employees, though it is to be hoped that both the sectional recommendations and overall conclusions and recommendations will be of use to them. The reasons for making 'The Arts Britain Ignores' an extended and largely descriptive survey lie in both the widespread ignorance and widespread interest that I have come across during the work. It became clear that what was needed was a document that would familiarise a broad cross-section with the field of ethnic minority arts: that would describe the social context and background, and stimulate curiosity.

Appendix B People and Organisations contacted

Zainab Abbas	Community worker
Oscar Abrams	Keskidee Centre
Adwe	African drum workshop
Mr Ben Agonsi	Ibo Club, Liverpool
Tassuduq Ahmed	Bengali National Cultural Society
Taiwo Ajai	Black Theatre Workshop
Mr Akal	Park Lane F.E. College, Leeds
Jamai Ali	Black Theatre of Brixton
John Allen	Central School of Drama
Maurice Andrews	Black Community Workers, Birmingham
Peter Andrewes	Huddersfield crc
Anne Angus	Commonwealth Institute
Kate Annan	SACU
Vasant Badiani	L & P Theatre Group, Birmingham
Maureen Baker	Leeds U.K.I.A.S.
Shango Baku	R.A.P.P.
Mr Bali	Jugnu dance/drama group, Derby
Calvin Beach	Leeds United Caribbean Association
Norman Beaton	Black Theatre of Brixton
Carmen Beckford	Bristol West Indian Dance Team and crc
Louise Bennett	Peformer and poet, Jamaica
Mr Beric	Ravna Gora Dance Group, Derby
Pamela Beshoff	Jamaica High Commission
Gillian Binns	Theatre Director
Robert Birmingham	Black Writers Workshop
Len Blackett	Painter, Cardiff
Peter Blackman	Agor-Mmba
Peter Bloch	Video Consultant
Barbara Bojanowska	Tatry Dance Group
Cephas Bosquet	Hewanorra Drama Group
Neville Braithwaite	Youth Officer, Lambeth
Barry Brazier	Leicester crc
Margie Brearley	Africa Centre
Mr Brzeski	Polish Theatre Workshop

Vincent Burke	Equity
Imrhu Caesar	Uhuru drama group, Leeds
Gloria Cameron	West Indian Dance Team and Lambeth crc
Duncan Campbell	Journalist
Joyce Campbell	Jamaica National Dance Theatre Company
Donzella Castell	Springboard, Huddersfield
C.S. Chan	Sidney Stringer School & Community College, Coventry
Victor Chan	Hong Kong Government Office
Alan Charles	Trinidad High Commission
Ian Charles	Leeds Carnival Committee
Louis Chase	Black Intermediate Technology
Dr Chatterjee	Manchester Indian Association
Tim Cheung	Hong Kong Cultural Service, London
Bishop Chrysostomos	St Andrews Greek School, Kentish Town
Mrs Kundri Clark	Bethnal Green Adult Education Institute
Sebastian Clarke	Caribbean Cultural International
Cecil Clovis	Merseyside Caribbean Association
Rufus Collins	Black Theatre of Brixton
Jacques Compton	West Indian Student Centre, London
Frank Cousins	Dark and Light Theatre
Douglas Craig	Sadlers Wells Theatre
Eileen Craine	British Federation of Music Festivals
Jeff Crawford	Caribbean Teachers Association
James Cummings	Croydon crc
Moses David	Youth Worker, Cardiff
Cllr Emanual Delgado	Cardiff
Cllr Phil Donleavy	Cardiff
Mr Douglas	West Indian Cultural Group, Derby
Beresford Edwards	West Indian Centre, Manchester
Vyvyan Ellacott	Kenneth More Theatre, Ilford
John English	Midlands Arts Centre
George Evgeniou	Theatro Technis
John Ewen	NYB
Alfred Fagon	Playwright
Faiz Ahmed Faiz	Poet
Mr Fashwe	Yoruba Club, Liverpool
Margaret Feeny	Africa Centre
Peter Fletcher	Leeds crc
Susan Forrester	N.C.S.S.
Henry & Greta Fowler	Little Theatre, Jamaica
Kate Francis	N.A.C.R.C.
Mrs Sybil Gamble	Derby crc

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Mr Godfrey	Further Education Department, Cardiff
Sunita Golwalla	Dancer
Christine Gregory	Llanover Hall, Cardiff
Tapan Gupta	The Tagorians, London
Dr Homer Habibis	Greek Cypriot Brotherhood
Peter Hall	Yorkshire Evening Post
Stuart Hall	Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, Birmingham
Mona Hammond	Actress
Aaron Haynes	Wolverhampton crc
Perry Henzel	Vista Productions, Jamaica
James Hodgson	Hounslow Borough Council
Luke Holland	W.E.L.D. Birmingham
Peggy Holroyde	Writer
Darcus Howe	Race Today
Jessica Huntley	Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications
Ravi Jain	National Association of Indian Youth
Mr Jarsky	Posk Polish Centre
Emanuel Jegede	Keskidee
Gus John	N.A.Y.C.
Howard Johnson	Director
Mr & Mrs Joshi	Birmingham Indian Cultural Centre
Kapo	Painter, Jamaica
Paul Keeler	World of Islam Festival
Mr Kiranowski	Polish Theatre Company, London
Costa Kleanthos	Greek Cypriot Brotherhood
Amrit Kotak	Indian National Theatre, London
Regina Kowaleska	Syrena, Polish children's theatre
M. Krishnamoorthy	Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan
Surendra Kumar	Manchester crc
Alton Kumalo	Temba Theatre Group
Michael Kustow	National Theatre
Dorothy Kuya	Liverpool crc
Sue Lambert	W.E.L.D., Birmingham
John La Rose	New Beacon Books
Courtney Laws	Brixton Neighbourhood Association
Joan Lestor MP	
Olive Lewin	Folk researcher, Jamaica
Martin Lightfoot	I.L.E.A.
Ted Little	Birmingham Arts Lab
Mrs Olga Lisiewicz	Polish Daily
Diman Liu	Researcher
Kenneth Lo	Writer

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Douglas Loundes	B.F.I.
Ros Lyle	Birmingham Asian Drama Society
Bill McAllister	Islington Bus Company
Paulette McCullock	Rialto Project, Liverpool
George McCockle	Nello James Centre, Manchester
Clement Maharaj	Photographer
Louis Mahoney	Black Theatre Workshop
Raymond Man	Musician
John Mapondera	Drum Arts Project
Victor Margrie	Crafts Advisory Committee
Mr Matthews	English Folk Society
Mustafa Matura	Playwright
Shantu Meher	The Aryans, Leicester
Stanley Menzies	Leeds Education Department
Ann Michael	Leeds crc
Ram Mittal	Lambeth Libraries Department
Lionel Morrison	Journalist
Ronald Morrison	Jamaican Thespians
Charlie Moor	Moss Side Youth Centre, Manchester
Mr & Mrs Mulk Raj	Bristol Indian Association
Ravi Muniran	Cardiff Teachers' Centre
Jan Murray	Journalist
Ossie Murray	Painter
Kanti Nagda	Anglo-Indian Art Circle, London
Phil Nanton	A.F.F.O.R., Birmingham
Dr Naseem	Mosque Committee, Birmingham
Mr Nasiruddin	Bangladeshi Welfare Association
Mr Nazaruk	Czuprynka dancers, Derby
Kwate Nee-Owoo	Ifiqiyah Films
Rex Nettleford	National Dance Theatre Company, Jamaica
Roy Neverson	West Indian Centre, Manchester
Lewis Nkosi	Writer
Norma Ogbisoko	Theatre Workshop, Liverpool
Mr Ogun	National Union of Nigeria, Liverpool
Mr Okubo	Federal Club, Liverpool
Leslie Palmer	Notting Hill Carnival Committee
Andreou Pantelekis	Cypriot Youth Club, Camden
C.T. Pang	Student
Alex Pascall	Radio Black Londoners
Ramesh Patel	Nava Kala
Winston Patrick	School of Art, Jamaica
Joe Persaud	Rialto Project, Liverpool

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Mike Phillips	Black Theatre Workshop
Paul Vaughan Phillips	Moonshine Arts Project, Brent
Ron Phillips	George Jackson House, Manchester
Winston Pindar	Kentish Town Youth Centre
Archie Pool	R.A.P.P.
Hamish Preston	ILEA Music Centre
Eulalie Procope	Leeds crc
Linda Rabben	Research Worker, Lambeth
Tara Rajkumar	Dancer
Mr Ramalingam	Croydon crc
Alay Rasul	National Federation of Bangladesh Associations
Mr Rouf	Bangladesh High Commission
Ivan Rawluk	Association of Ukrainian Organisations
Lloyd Reckord	National Theatre Trust, Jamaica
Elias Resuki	Horley Road Centre, Bristol
Chris Rhodes	NABC
Trevor Rhone	Barn Theatre, Jamaica
Ritchie Riley	Painter, Dancer
Earle Robinson	Highfields Community Centre, Leicester
Angela Rodaway	Bristol West Indian Theatre Group
Arthur Rose	Community Relations Commission
Rumana Saeed	Journalist
Syed Safiruddin	Liverpool Pakistani Association
Andrew Salkey	Writer
Hope Sealey	Jamaica Tourist Board
Phil Sealy	Brent crc
Mrs Serc	Polish Association, Derby
Rehman Shah	Bengali Artists Society, London
Saleem Shahid	BBC Asian Programme
Birendra Shankar	Sanskritik Indian Arts
Ravi Shankar	Musician
Mr Sharma	Kentish Town Hindu Centre
Frank Shephard	Student Welfare Advisory Service, Cardiff
Wasim Siddiqui	Urdu Service, Bush House
Mr Sidgwick	Leeds Education Department
Natwar Singh	Indian High Commission
Sucha Singh	Anjaana Dance Group, Derby
Basil Smith	Jamaica High Commission
Slawko Synczyszyn	Odessa Music Group, Derby
Maureen Taylor	Birmingham crc
Aneurin Thomas	Welsh Arts Council
Mike and Maggie Thorn	Bristol Street Theatre

Sue Timothy	Oval House
Helen Tobert	NCSS
John Traxson	Birmingham crc
Geoffrey Tribe	British Council
Dominic Tsin	Chinese Service, Bush House
Ming Tsow	Journalist
Vincent Tsui	Chinese New Year Committee
Gideon Udofia	Nigerian Social Club, Liverpool
Dr P. Vanezis	Cyprus High Commission
David Wainwright	Manchester North Music Centre
Anne Walmsley	Longmans Caribbean
V. White	Bute Town Youth Centre and Cardiff Community Council
T Bone Wilson	Keskidee
Carolyn Woodcock	Midlands Arts Centre
Bev Woodruffe	ILEA
Lettie Woods	Artists Information Registry
Johnny Worthy	Equity
Pauline Yanson	Grasshopper Theatre
Manley Young	Dark and Light Theatre
Dr S.M. Zaman	Pakistani Embassy
Olga Zeromska	Oskar Korbuth dancers
C. Zissimos	Cypriot Community Association

(In addition all 87 local community relations councils in Great Britain were contacted, 94 local authorities with sizeable ethnic minority content, and 9 regional arts associations serving those areas. Where the above list specifies particular cro's or local authority employees, for instance, they are ones who gave me a considerable amount of their time. Also contacted were the DES, Home Office, Associations of Metropolitan Authorities, of County Authorities, and of District Councils.)

Appendix C

(i) EVIDENCE FROM THE BBC

In building its programmes the BBC is constantly seeking excellence in all fields: drama, light entertainment, documentary, current affairs, etc. Its duty to the subject matter of any programme, and to the likely audience for it, demands that its standards be high and be seen to be high, nationally and internationally. In this context, the fact that a potential contributor to a programme may belong to a racial minority is only incidental. Thus, Sammy Davis Junior or Diana Ross and the Supremes do not find their way into programmes because they are members of ethnic minorities but because they are great international performers. The same applies to all other forms of talent in the country: ability to sing; ability to act; ability to entertain by dancing, or by juggling, or by high wire trapeze display; or by painting, pottery making, or any other form of craft or artistic activity. In other words rare talent will find its way to the microphone or onto the screen from whichever quarter it comes. Not so rare talent will have a less good chance of finding its way, but nevertheless, some chance, in the sense that the BBC needs to bring new talent forward and search round for it, in order to avoid its programmes becoming stereotyped and its contributors and performers too much of a touring company. Not so rare talent must also face the fact that after being tried out it has to hold its place in competition with all other talent available.

The BBC is aware that certain international or artistic groups of performers have had good reason to come together on an ethnic basis. The Harlem Dancers are an example. No programme door would be closed to such a group. Indeed, all available doors might be more open to them, to the extent that such a Group is a novel phenomenon in a multi-racial society. For instance, were there to be a sudden flowering of unusual talent (eg say original pottery-making in Bradford), then this would be a phenomenon that would probably be worth including in a Northern-produced magazine programme. The fact that this pottery was also the product of an ethnic group within Bradford would give it an added interest in the mind of most programme-builders, because it would be an indication of a multi-racial society working harmoniously and starting to produce another positive achievement.

It is possible to take any week's output on BBC television and count up the number of appearances in drama output made by white actors on the one hand and by coloured actors on the other (of African or West Indian origin or from the sub-continent of India). Such a tally will always produce figures that—superficially—look to be low for their proportion of coloured actors. Yet the ratio may, even so, be above the actual ratio of coloured to white within the whole population. Moreover, wherever it may fall below this natural ratio, the reason may very well have to do with the nature of the inherited drama of the past. For instance, no 'Play of the Month' by Sheridan is likely to contain a coloured actor or actress; and it would be false to introduce one, as it would be false to introduce a coloured actor into a play by Noel Coward or Terrence Rattigan. On the other hand, there have been successful stage experiments where a whole play that deals with eternal values can be staged with a black cast. There was recently a black 'King Lear' put on in New York and the way is certainly open for a television adaptation of such a production to be screened on television, should a suitable opportunity arise. 'Othello' is a work that is always likely to be broadcast; and so provide a leading role for a black actor. Moreover, contemporary drama is tending more and more to provide acceptable opportunities for immigrant actors. A contemporary series like 'Z Cars' is bound to include opportunities for coloured actors to play all kinds of parts and this process will advance, as society in Britain advances with the task of absorbing its immigrant communities.

To some extent the contemporary dramatist, whether he is writing a 'Play for Today' or a simple episode for a series like 'Z Cars' or 'Softly, Softly', will be reflecting the society in which we live. This means that the writer will take explicit account of immigrants in writing stories that concern the problems of an immigrant community. He will also take implicit account of immigrants by including them naturally, wherever in society they are most likely to appear. Naturally is the key. It would be the worst form of condescension if the BBC Script Unit were to start inserting immigrant parts into scripts.

The fact that David Pitt has just been made a life Peer has created a situation in which the fictional writer can now create, with credibility, a political role of that kind of coloured actor. Some years ago a fictionalised story about a hospital might have included one rather junior black nurse. Now it would be quite plausible for a similar story to include—say—two immigrant doctors, one immigrant staff nurse and at least two ordinary nurses, who were also coloured.

It would also be offensive to the immigrant community if any public body like the BBC tried to encourage script-writers to write immigrants in to invariably heroic parts or to ensure that they always acted roles that showed

them, by implication, in a good light. On the other hand, the immigrant community is protected to the extent that the BBC feels itself bound to ensure that particular care is taken over any programme where an immigrant actor has to take the part of one of the villains, or is somehow portrayed in a bad light. It would obviously be undesirable in a story where a crime has been committed and where there were four suspects, one of whom was coloured, for the coloured man to turn out inevitably to be the villain. On the other hand, it would not be unhelpful if at an early moment in the story he were to be suspected and then at a later moment to turn out to be quite innocent. Again, a credible middle course has to be steered between being plausible and being patronising. In all these matters the BBC is conscious of its responsibilities to society, and of its wish never to leave behind, in any programme—fact or fiction—a sediment that could be construed as likely to exacerbate racial tension in any form.

(ii) EVIDENCE FROM THE IBA

It is fair to say that in the choice between specialist programmes for ethnic minorities and general programmes which can reflect the life of immigrants in the British community the IBA has favoured the second option. The IBA has regarded all the communities living in Britain as part of a greater whole rather than as independent entities living their own separate lives in isolation from each other. The IBA is aware that it would be inadequate to argue that it has treated immigrant communities fairly, simply because in current affairs and documentary programmes it has impartially examined the issues arriving from their arrival in this country. To concentrate on the treatment given to immigrant communities by current affairs programmes would be to see the situation of immigrants in the UK as one giving rise all the time to issues and problems in relation to the host society. Whereas in fact a more rounded view of immigrant life in the UK and the contribution which immigrants make to British society can only be achieved if the life of such communities aside from problems can be examined as well.

Independent Television does not have a regular programme devoted to the linguistic and cultural interests of any of our immigrant communities, nor does it have a regular programme of immigrant music. We have felt so far that to introduce a special programme for immigrants would be basically to duplicate good work that is being done elsewhere and the absence of music programmes for immigrants reflects nothing more than the relative infrequency of purely music programmes on television. This is in itself a reflection of the nature of television and the difficulty of transposing music to television. Nonetheless, insofar as pop music is broadcast on television, it reflects to a very great

extent the influence of West Indian and African musical forms.

In Independent Television's single channel situation, the pressure for satisfying the demands from minorities of all kinds whether ethnic or not is enormous, and in reality impossible to satisfy. There is an obligation on any general broadcasting service such as that transmitted by the IBA to provide programmes which will be of wide interest, and indeed there is much evidence that the existing service does give a great deal of pleasure, stimulation, and satisfaction to members of immigrant communities. To place the needs of the general audience first is not simply or even fundamentally a matter of maximising advertising revenue as might be thought in a commercially financed system, since the same pressures exist on a public service broadcasting system financed by a virtually universal licence or out of general taxation. It might be argued that a television service or services deliberately catering in the main for minorities must await the arrival of some system of subscription television in which the minorities concerned can pay directly for programmes which they wish to see at times convenient to themselves.

It is the IBA's belief that in the general output of Independent Television the life of immigrant communities is now being more widely and accurately represented than used to be the case. In factual programmes a number of companies in the Independent Television system have introduced, in the past two years, various series of 'Access' programmes, notably London Weekend, HTV and Tyne Tees, and the aim of all these series has been to provide an opportunity for minority groups, whether ethnic or not, to have an opportunity to state their point of view. In the documentary 'A Passage to England' produced by Thames Television, there was a very sympathetic and revealing account of the way in which a Pakistani girl, brought up in this country, faced the problem of adjusting to the traditional marriage customs of her parents. This programme did much to bring home to viewers in Britain the nature of the cultural adjustment which many Asian immigrants have to make. In children's programmes a serial produced by ATV in Birmingham, 'The Siege of Golden Hill', involves the children of Asian immigrants living in the Midlands with children of white parents in a story of city life which has done its best to capture genuinely the situation of children from different cultural backgrounds living in the same area and going to the same schools. Yorkshire Television's documentary 'The Bradford Godfather' looked with insight and sympathy into the life of the Muslim community in Bradford. A play soon to be transmitted, 'The Machinegunner', from HTV deals in a fictional form with immigrants living in Bristol and includes a number of coloured actors in the principal roles. The IBA is aware of the criticisms that have been made of 'Love Thy Neighbour' by a number of community relations councils, but the Authority's view is that the views of such councils and indeed views of a number of people professionally concerned with race

relations are not always matched by the immigrant population at large. From enquiries which the Authority made it emerged that many immigrants enjoyed 'Love Thy Neighbour' and positively looked forward to it. Others did echo the criticisms of the series that were made elsewhere.

A further attempt at situation comedy reflecting West Indian life in Britain is to be made in Spring this year when a series of 13 half-hour programmes entitled 'The Fosters' will be networked in peak-time. These programmes are produced by London Weekend Television and revolve around a fictional West Indian family with three children living in a GLC block of flats. The parents are West Indian born, the children are born in Britain. In making these programmes, London Weekend Television have sought the advice of a West Indian member of the IBA's General Advisory Council, Lawrence Inniss, who is a social worker with Birmingham's Department of Social Services. His advice has been at script and production stage in the development of the programme.

London Weekend have also a weekly Sunday morning half-hour for teenagers—'The London Weekend Show'. Whilst teenage fashion and attitudes cross more social and ethnic boundaries than those of other age groups 'The London Weekend Show' devoted a complete edition in January this year to Jamaican music and the influence of social conditions in the composition and performance of such music. London Weekend's 'The London Programme' shown on Sunday evening has also devoted a good deal of time, extending over several editions, to relations in Brixton between the West Indian community and the Metropolitan Police. Such current affairs items do figure in other regional news and current affairs programmes particularly in areas such as the Midlands and the North where there are relatively high concentrations of immigrants and their families. Occasionally there are religious programmes devised principally though not exclusively for West Indian viewers. For example in January there was a Roman Catholic Mass broadcast on the ITV network by ATV from Handsworth in Birmingham. This was conducted by the Roman Catholic Chaplain for Community Relations in Birmingham assisted by two West Indian priests. The accompanying choir and band were made up of West Indians who played and sang in their own idiom. In February there was a celebration of Holy Communion from a Church in the multi-racial district of St Paul's Bristol, networked by HTV.

The 18 Independent Local Radio stations (19 in April) now broadcasting to approximately half the population of the UK seek to serve ethnic minority groups by integrating material for them within general programming. For example, Capital Radio's 'Open Line' has examined matters affecting immigrant groups on more than one occasion; Mary Kenny, writing in the London Evening Standard on 16th October 1975 noted that:

> 'The (second) thing that local radio obviously does do better is to be in touch with the grass roots. A phone-in last Monday about race relations brought many really frank phone calls and questions both from English people and from people of immigrant origin—black, brown and Italian too. Yet on Thursday David Jacobs, in presenting (BBC Radio 4's) "Any Answers" had to admit that on the sore question of race relations they had not had a single letter either from an immigrant or from someone who supported the immigrant point of view'.

The ILR stations broadcast information relevant to these groups and individuals as they do for all the different minority groups which go to make up the 'majority' of the community as a whole.

It may be noted in passing that one strong 'immigrant' element in ILR is 'reggae' or 'soul' music which is played often both in specialist programmes—which also deal with the origins and cultural background to this type of music—and within general programming. Although some so-called 'reggae' music is commercial imitation, genuine 'reggae' is popular and much played, especially by West Indian presenters such as Greg Edwards from Grenada (Capital Radio) and Erskine 'T' from Barbados (BRMB Radio in Birmingham).

The ILR stations in Birmingham and Bradford broadcast programmes for ethnic minority groups in their own languages. On BRMB, Mrs T. Hasnain, the Birmingham community relations officer, presents the weekly programme 'Geet Mala' which includes popular music and speech in Hindi (and Hindi advertisements, which are in great demand). Pennine Radio in Bradford broadcasts a daily programme between 8 pm and 9 pm from Monday to Friday, with Urdu the most widely used language in speech, but with some Hindi on Tuesday night and from time to time records in Punjabi and Gujurati.

However, except in areas with a large, first generation immigrant population with specialist needs, ILR stations generally believe that the most appropriate way to broadcast material for ethnic minorities is to include it in general mixed programming, so that both the immigrant and native populations hear 'integrated' radio, rather than a service in which this material is confined to broadcast 'ghettos'.

Broadcasting is an important factor, but only one factor, in the process of peacefully assimilating immigrant communities into the fabric of British life. So far Independent Television and Radio have by and large avoided special programming for immigrant communities partly because of their obligations to the UK audience as a whole and partly because they do not wish to increase the feeling of isolation and possibly segregation felt by many immigrants. Independent Broadcasting places its hopes in reflecting in all aspects of its

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output the realities of immigrant life in this country, the contribution which immigrants have to offer and the problems and difficulties which still lie ahead.

(iii) EVIDENCE FROM EQUITY

The Afro-Asians Committee of Equity has been in operation for two years during which it has sought to establish beyond measure of doubt that Afro-Asians have a particular problem as far as employment in the entertainment industry is concerned.

Equity recognised this difficulty as long ago as 1965 when it set up the Coloured Artists' Committee which had the specific task of advising the Equity Council with regard to applications for labour permits for foreign artists who were coloured. The original Committee broadened its scope of activities, since it was aware that in order to resist the importation of foreign labour, it was necessary to encourage the use of indigenous talent. To this end, it formulated proposals which Equity adopted advocating the introduction of integrated casting. Equity promoted this policy in its discussions with various employers, whose response was to accept the argument in principle and to state that they would do what they could to improve the employment position of coloured artists.

For various reasons, the Coloured Artists' Committee disappeared, with the result that in the early 1970s, there was no concerted activity within Equity on behalf of Afro-Asian artists. Equity was prompted by the Afro-Asian Artists Association into taking further action on behalf of its members and with the election in 1975 of a black actor to represent the chorus, John Worthy, the Council agreed to his suggestion that the Committee should be revived.

The Coloured Artists' Committee was, therefore, reconstituted and subsequently renamed the Afro Asians Committee. This Committee set about its task of convincing both Equity and the employers that Afro-Asians were seriously under-employed in every sector of the industry. The Committee commenced its work by conducting a detailed survey of the rate of employment on television and produced a report which demonstrated that Afro-Asians obtained approximately half the amount of work which they might be expected to receive in view of the proportion of the Equity membership who were not white.

A similar report was produced more recently which showed clearly that the employment rate for Afro-Asians in the theatre was no better, and in certain areas was considerably worse than the situation in television.

The Committee has been anxious to establish that it is not solely concerned

with the numbers of jobs which Afro-Asians obtain in various sectors of the industry, so much as the kind of jobs that they do. The alarming evidence which the television report showed is that no Afro-Asian during the week conducted by this survey was employed in a leading part in any drama or comedy series and that in the main, whenever they were employed it was in the role of extras and walk-ons. The Committee has also been concerned over the fact that Afro-Asian artists are hardly ever cast in parts unless the part specifically requires a non-white. This usually means that attention is drawn to racial conflict or tension of some kind. Few plays or drama series ever involve Afro-Asian artists as ordinary people with the same problems as any other member of Society.

The Causes of this Problem

Any assessment of the causes of this problem will depend on the point of view of the person analysing it. From the Afro-Asian artist's point of view, it is quite simply because directors will not employ him. The viewpoint offered by many directors and casting directors has been that they would be only too happy to engage Afro-Asians in their productions if there were sufficient numbers of them available with the requisite talent and experience.

There is no suggestion from the Committee that Afro-Asian actors and actresses should be used regardless of their talent. The Committee is not pressing for a policy which could affect artistic standards. At the same time, the Committee recognises that there are Afro-Asian artists, just as there are white artists who do not possess the talent which is required by directors and casting directors. The situation for Afro-Asians in this respect is no better and no worse than the general situation for the Equity membership as a whole.

When directors complain, however, over the fact that Afro-Asians lack the experience they are seeking when casting for their productions, the Committee has been led to despair. Unless Afro-Asians are offered work in the first place, it is scarcely possible for them to obtain the experience which is subsequently required for them to achieve more work. A vicious circle is thus created which the Afro-Asians Committee has been seeking to break.

It is, therefore, necessary to determine why Afro-Asians lack the experience and why some of them may lack the talent which the employers are seeking. The first reason is that very few Afro-Asian artists have ever received any formal training at Drama school. This to an extent stems from the failure of the Careers Advisory Service to persuade potential Afro-Asian students to go to drama school if it is their wish to enter the acting profession. It would be unfair to blame the Careers Advisory Service or to attribute responsibility in this way, since it is undoubtedly true that few Afro-Asian school pupils have shown any inclination to enter the acting profession.

It is important to consider for a moment why this is so. The Committee was informed by a representative of the ILEA service that she frequently came across black children who wanted to become entertainers and singers, simply because they see so many black stars in this field of the entertainment industry. Given that there are very few well-known black actors or actresses, it is therefore, scarcely surprising that children show little interest in seeking to emulate them.

It should be noted that the Committee is not actively encouraging young people to enter the acting profession. This would be contrary to normal Equity policy, which generally speaking, seeks to dissuade newcomers from adding to the swelling ranks of unemployed artists. What the Committee's function in raising this point consists of is persuading those children who might at some stage enter the profession to consider going to drama school first. It is in this respect that the Careers Advisory Service has a special responsibility.

The fact that Afro-Asians generally, and children in particular, feel no sense of identification with the acting profession would be met to some extent if the Theatre in Education groups which visit schools themselves contained more actors of Afro-Asian origin. The report published on employment in the theatre shows that the T.I.E. are certainly no better, and in some respects worse, in the ratio of Afro-Asians whom they employ. Although the Committee is anxious to state that it does not believe the T.I.E. groups in any way discourage Afro-Asian artists from joining them, it nevertheless feels very strongly that if more Afro-Asian actors and actresses did visit the schools, it would undoubtedly have an effect on the black children in the school and reduce the sense of alienation which clearly exists at present.

With a specific regard to the Drama schools, however, the Committee was very alarmed in recent weeks to learn that at one leading drama school there was a discriminatory policy which operated against the Afro-Asian students in the school. Although the school has now completely altered its policy to the satisfaction of the Committee, it is a matter of some concern that possibly other schools operate a similar policy whereby Afro-Asian students are not permitted to complete the full training course because of the casting problems involved in the final year 'showcase' productions which are seen by casting directors and agents. The interests of the Race Relations Board in this matter showed clearly that such a policy would constitute a contravention of the Race Relations Act, quite apart from the total irresponsibility of such a policy were it to be practised or continued.

Training for the acting profession is not confined to formal drama school training. Employment of young actors and actresses in the repertory theatre is regarded as a form of 'post-graduate training', in that an actor straight from drama school is given a wide range of opportunities as a member of a repertory

company, in which he can be cast in a variety of roles which give him the chance to build by experience on the formal training at drama school.

The report published by Equity on the Employment of Afro-Asians in the Theatre showed that employment opportunities for Afro-Asians in repertory companies were virtually non-existent. Few, if any repertory companies, have engaged Afro-Asians as full members of their company. The rare occasions on which Afro-Asians have worked in repertory companies have been as guest artists for one particular production.

The normal career pattern for a member of the acting profession is to spend the early part of his career as a member of a repertory company where he obtains the necessary experience to seek work in other sectors of the industry. The fact that Afro-Asians fail to obtain this experience militates most seriously against their chances of obtaining the experience which is required by directors and casting directors elsewhere. Indeed, the fact that they are not taken on as members of the company in the early stages of their career usually means that they will not be engaged later on as full members of a repertory company playing leading roles.

The lack of formal training and experience thus constitute the vicious circle to which reference has already been made. The Committee believes that progress will only be made as far as the employment of Afro-Asians is concerned if somewhere along the line this vicious circle is broken.

The problem also stems from the tendency of directors to type-cast Afro-Asians on the relatively rare occasions when they are engaged. With some notable exceptions, in the main Afro-Asian actors and actresses are only used when the scripts specify that a non-white actor should be used. Although the Committee is prepared to accept quite readily that there is a limitation to the kind of role that an Afro-Asian can play, it nevertheless believes strongly that there are many parts both in historical and contemporary plays which Afro-Asians could play without straining the credibility of the play, even though the writer may not have had such casting in mind when writing the play.

Solutions to the Problem

In general, this problem can only be solved if everyone concerned were to make a positive effort to use Afro-Asian artists more frequently. If the problem for directors and casting directors is as simple as they have stated to the Committee, then the solution is relatively simple, namely to give Afro-Asians more work so that they can, therefore, gain more experience and thus obtain more work as of right by virtue of their talent and experience.

In 1968, as has already been stated, Equity recognised that the general solution to this problem lay in a commitment to integrated casting. British society is now a multi-racial society, but the dramatic output of British

television and theatre does not reflect society in this light. This report has already indicated the Committee's commitment to the need to engage Afro-Asian actors and actresses in roles which do not necessarily demand them. There are many professions and occupations which include non-white employees. Quite apart from the obvious examples of public transport and our hospital service, which in reality are substantially staffed by immigrant workers, it is no longer a matter of surprise to see teachers, social workers, bank employees and workers in the public sector who are of Afro-Asian origin. It should not, therefore, be difficult when casting parts in plays to include Afro-Asians playing one or other of these occupations. Yet very rarely does it happen that an Afro-Asian is used other than when it is absolutely necessary.

The nature of integrated casting as advocated by Equity, which is fully endorsed by the Committee is that an actor should be engaged purely on the basis of his talent and without regard to his colour. This is the corner-stone of Equity policy on this matter, though the Committee regrets that even though it was first advocated by Equity seven years ago, little or no progress has been made in any sector of the industry to realise this policy.

This policy can only be fully realised if the writers also are convinced that they have a role to play in solving the problem. They should be urged not to be so specific when describing their characters which would give the director the excuse or even the reason to believe that to engage an Afro-Asian in one or other of the parts would distort the meaning of the play as envisaged by the writer. The writer should also be encouraged specifically to include more roles of an Afro-Asian nature, though to some extent to advocate this constitutes a contradiction of the policy of integrated casting. Despite this, unless a positive effort is made by writers, then the general problem cannot be solved.

It will be inevitably necessary and even desirable for Afro-Asian actors and actresses to engage in a self-help programme by setting up their own workshops and community theatre groups, in order to provide for themselves what the industry as a whole has failed to offer. To some extent, the purpose of such groups has a social benefit going beyond the terms of reference which Equity or its Afro-Asian Committee would adopt in relation to its members. Clearly, one of the main aims of the Minority Arts Report will be to encourage the development of an Ethnic Cultural Movement. Whereas Equity and the Afro-Asians Committee is in no way opposed to such a movement, its role must be fundamentally, if not exclusively concerned with the job opportunities for its members.

With this in mind, the Committee has advocated the establishment of an Afro-Asian Casting Register, to which the Equity Council has agreed in principle, pending further consideration and investigation of the practical and financial possibilities. It has been generally accepted by both Afro-

Asian members and by employers and agents alike that such a register is desirable in the short term in order to give those responsible for casting the information they need as to the talent available. This is a matter which is currently being considered by officials of the Race Relations Board in order to determine whether there is any danger of contravening the Race Relations Act.

Specific Measures to be taken by the Arts Council

It is Equity's view that the Arts Council can play a special role in the solution of the employment difficulties for Afro-Asian artists.

This could take the form of special grants either to theatres or writers with a view to promoting plays which are suitable for Afro-Asian casts. There is a precedent for this in the grant aiding policy of the Arts Council which could be developed in order to encourage more plays providing opportunities for Afro Asian artists.

The Arts Council could offer more specific help to workshops which are set up by Ethnic Minority groups with a view to mounting their own productions. This help could take the form of capital support or touring grants to enable these groups to take their product to theatres and community centres throughout the country. It is vital that sufficient grants are given to these groups in order to enable them to operate on a professional basis.

The Arts Council could encourage workshops to operate schemes, such as those which have been tried at the Royal Court, to encourage writers to present scripts which are suitable for the employment of Afro-Asian actors.

On the technical side, the Arts Council needs to encourage the recruitment of Afro-Asian trainee directors onto their courses, as well as to attract Afro-Asians onto Stage Management Courses at Drama Schools. Again, this must be put in the context not of attracting more people to an already overcrowded profession, but to ensure that those who express an interest in working in this area of the industry should not experience any difficulty in obtaining the necessary training. Unless, in the field of television, there are more Afro-Asians on the production side, it is difficult to envisage how fundamental changes in the thinking of television companies can be achieved.

The evidence of the Afro-Asian Committee has tended to emphasise the importance of professional workshops rather than in urging Arts Council support for an Afro-Asian Arts Centre. This emphasis follows from the general points which have been made about Equity's fundamental role, which must clearly be reflected in the work of its Afro-Asians Committee. Whereas clearly the Committee would in no way be opposed to the setting up of an Arts Centre, which specifically caters for an Ethnic Minority Group, the Committee has reservations about the benefit to the membership if the Arts

Council were to concentrate any funding for the Minority Arts on such an Arts Centre. There is a danger of yet another intellectual middle class ghetto being formed for blacks which would neither benefit the majority of those for whom it was supposedly created, nor the members of the profession whose interests Equity represents.

What is needed is a workshop operating on more comprehensive lines than the Dance Centre which could constitute a professional hot-house to which members of the profession can turn, as and when they are able, for training in one or other area of their job. The Drama Schools could be encouraged by the Arts Council to provide occasional in-service courses for Afro-Asian members which to some extent would make up for the fact that so many of them have had no formal training whatever.

Conclusion

The Afro-Asians Committee awaits with interest the recommendations of the Minority Arts Report. It appreciates that the very setting up of such a body to investigate the problem is a sign that the Arts Council and the Gulbenkian Foundation have been convinced by the Community Relations Commission that something positive needs to be done. Whatever the proposals of the Committee, it is essential that the report should not be allowed to lie gathering dust on one of the many shelves in the Arts Council offices. It will certainly be the intention of the Committee to continue to draw attention to the general problem and in particular to press the Arts Council into recognising that it has a role to play and a responsibility to help solve the problems experienced by Afro-Asian artists.

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The Commission for Racial Equality

The Commission for Racial Equality was set up by the Race Relations Act 1976 with the duties of working towards the elimination of discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between different racial groups generally.

The Commission has broad powers to undertake investigations for any purpose connected with its duties. Where it finds discrimination, it may issue a non-discrimination notice requiring this to cease. It may bring proceedings against persistent discriminators and in cases concerning discriminatory advertisements and instructions, aid or pressure to discriminate. It undertakes advisory and educational work, and assists community relations councils, ethnic minority organisations, and other organisations in the promotion of equality of opportunity and good race relations.

Although the Commission is not obliged to investigate individual complaints, it has discretion to advise and assist complainants where there are special reasons for doing so.

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